



School heads at the top of their class

Section Two, Education page 12

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Section Two, £1m

THE INDEPENDENT

3,059

THURSDAY 8 AUGUST 1996

WEATHER Cloudy start, may brighten later

40P (IR 45P)

Just one, and no more than one, for the road

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Police chiefs are poised to call for tougher laws on drink-driving, bringing a new "one-pint" limit a step closer.

The move will increase the pressure on the Government, which is already facing campaigns from doctors and the anti-alcohol lobby to lower the amount that motorists can legally drink.

The Independent understands that next week the chief constables in England and Wales will give the campaign fresh momentum by supporting a reduction from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg.

For most drivers, 50mg would mean a maximum of only one pint of beer, or two glasses of wine or whisky. Offenders would face a minimum one-year ban and heavy fines.

Last year about 600 people were killed on British roads by motorists over the limit.

Until now, the Government has resisted calls for a reduction, arguing that a change would have little effect, even though their own figures suggest they might save about 14 lives a year.

Police chiefs in Scotland backed the lower 50mg limit in November, but ministers will find it harder to shrug off the views of the 43 forces in England and Wales on whether the limit should be reduced. It will debate the issue next Wednesday. The Independent understands that while there is strong support for lowering the level to 50mg, an alternative suggestion to lower the limit to zero has been ruled out.

The committee will hear that lowering the level from 80mg to 50mg reduces the likelihood of an accident by up to 40 per cent. Any decision will need to be ratified at a full council meeting.

Chief Inspector Paul McElroy, staff officer of David

Alcohol and petrol are an inflammatory mixture. Anyone who flicks the ignition after more than a glass of wine should be prosecuted, fined, banned from driving, and in the worst cases imprisoned

Leading article page 11

in the police service believe the time has come for a change, and that if just one life is saved, it is worthwhile."

The Labour Party has pledged to review the drink-drive limit and yesterday criticised the Government's failure to reconsider the issue.

The traffic committee of the Association of Chief Police Officers has surveyed all forces in England and Wales on whether the limit should be reduced. It will debate the issue next Wednesday. The Independent understands that while there is strong support for lowering the level to 50mg, an alternative suggestion to lower the limit to zero has been ruled out.

The committee will hear that lowering the level from 80mg to 50mg reduces the likelihood of an accident by up to 40 per cent. Any decision will need to be ratified at a full council meeting.

Last month the British Medical Council, the all-party Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety and Alcohol Concern produced a report calling for the lower 50mg level.

They said a reduction in the blood-alcohol limit in Australia from 80mg to 50mg, combined with random breath-testing, had dramatically reduced drink-driving among both moderate and heavy drinkers and had cut the number of accidents.

Studies have shown there is public support for a lower drink-driving limit, the report said. Seven of the 15 countries in the European Union have limits of 50mg or less.

Denmark 80 Max fine 4 per cent of driver's income. Max disqualification for one year. Imprisonment up to 2 years.

France 50 Max fine £386. Disqualifications three months to life. Imprisonment up to 2 years.

Italy 80 Max fine £215. Disqualifications up to 3 months. Max imprisonment one month.

Europe's laws on drinking and driving

Country	Permitted Blood Alcohol Concentrations (MG/100ml)	Punishment
Belgium	50	Max fine £1,913. Disqualification for 5 years. Imprisonment up to 6 years.
Denmark	80	Max fine 4 per cent of driver's income. Max disqualification for one year. Imprisonment up to 2 years.
France	50	Max fine £386. Disqualifications three months to life. Imprisonment up to 2 years.
Italy	80	Max fine £215. Disqualifications up to 3 months. Max imprisonment one month.

Williams, chief constable of Surrey Constabulary and chairman of the ACPO traffic committee, said: "We feel it is time to reconsider the levels."

"Our stance has always been you should not drink and drive. We still believe that, but we are now looking at what effect a 50mg limit could have."

There's convincing evidence that a reduction would reduce accidents and the number of people who drink and drive. But it will not affect the real problem drinkers who ignore all warnings."

Earlier this year, forces in England and Wales began automatic breath tests in all traffic accidents to which a police officer was called. There is also growing support for similar road-side drug tests.

The number of drink-related road deaths fell dramatically in England and Wales from 1,650 in 1979 to 540 in 1993. But now it has started to rise again. There were 540 in 1994 and 580 last year. There were 15,000 road deaths and injuries in 1994 in which at least one driver was over the limit. Police chiefs in Scotland said a reduction to 50mg would have prevented 213 serious accidents between 1988 and 1993.

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Leading article, page 11



Short order: If police chiefs get their way, this will soon be the limit for all motorists

QUICKLY

Londonderry block
A huge army and police operation mounted in Londonderry to block off part of the city's walls from Saturday's controversial Apprentice Boys march produced immediate loyalist anger last night. Page 2

Possible life on Mars
Scientists and religious thinkers were digesting the news yesterday that traces of organic chemicals - so tiny that thousands would fit on a full stop - are "evidence for primitive life on early Mars." Page 3

Cyclists protest
As hundreds of cyclists from anti-car protest group Reclaim the Streets added to traffic jams in central London caused by the Tube strike, the RAC said some of the problems could have been avoided through better co-ordination and accused the Government of washing its hands of the problem. Page 20

How immigrants live
A unique picture of the lives of Britain's 3.2 million immigrants is provided by the biggest official study of its type ever made. Page 6

Snitch on a relative, shop a neighbour. Mr Lilley is pleased to take your call

STEVE BOGGAN

The machinery whirred and clicked into action and another life was about to be changed.

"Thank you for calling the National Benefits Fraud Hot Line. This service is absolutely confidential. My name is Simon, how may I help you?"

Simon sat in a padded booth on the seventh floor of an anonymous building in the heart of Lancashire. He wore a headset, and his pen was poised over a list of questions for the latest informant anxious, in the Government's words, to "Beat-a-Cheat."

"No," replied Simon. "What's the name of the person involved?" And the caller gave the name of a 27-year-old single mother of two, from Rochester in Kent.

Despite claiming single parent benefits and family allowance, the woman, the caller said, in a gleeful southern accent, also had five part-time jobs. Slowly, patiently, Simon steered the man through the form, extracting details of the woman's address, her height, build and hair colour, details of her vehicle and her movements,

even descriptions of her clothes. But it wasn't until he asked whether the cheat had any distinguishing features that this already uncomfortable process became thoroughly distasteful. "None that I could tell you about," the caller chucked.

The man then disclosed that he was the woman's ex-husband and that the "five part-time jobs" were in fact five sessions spent as a cleaner at five different private addresses, one of which he supplied. "Erm, if they investigate her, will they let her know she was grassed on?" he asked shakily.

"No," replied Simon. "This service is absolutely confidential". And another case was opened for one of the 5,000 fraud investigators being fed by the voracious hot line.

Since it opened on Monday at the instigation of Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, the small department with its 62 operators has been deluged with calls about alleged fraudsters. On day one, more than 1,600 calls were received; on day two, the number was 3,500. By 12.25pm yesterday, when *The Independent*



was invited to listen in, a further 790 informants had called.

"The response has been astonishing," said Rob, manager of the hot line. None of the staff will reveal their real names - they have already received threats, including one to fire-bomb their office if it were identified. "We have had people report benefit fraudsters and companies paying cash in hand to people on benefits.

"In one case, we had a person report an entire street -

names, details of benefits, the claimants' descriptions, their car registration numbers, where they were working, the lot. In another case, someone reported an entire village."

And the calls kept coming - hardly surprising, with fraud running at £2bn a year. "Thank you for calling the National..."

"This time it was a woman with a London accent who wanted to report another single mother of two. The cheat, she alleged, had a six-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son and was working part-time at an insurance office despite claiming income support and housing benefit. "She has a child-minder take the little one to school so she can go to work," the caller confided.

An address, a description and the fact that the woman lives alone were all forthcoming. At the end of the call, the impression was left that a score had been settled.

"You get some right duffers and some very calm, intelligent people," said Simon, 34, who, along with the other operators, was given one day's training before "being thrown in at the deep end".

"I used to work in retail sales, but I wanted to work for the Benefits Agency," he said. "I enjoy the customer care element without the sales side of things."

And the telephone rang again. This time it was a wheezy woman from Birmingham who wanted to inform on a 23-year-old man from Dronfield. "I've reported them before," she said.

"But they didn't do anything about him then." She went on to provide details of his girlfriend and brother, who were also cheats.

"The other night I went home with a sore finger and thumb from writing," said Simon. "One of the girls has got plasters on her thumb. We take down so much information and pass it on. It isn't our job to evaluate it."

"At the end of the day, we don't know what happens or whether anyone's life is ruined as a result. If we did know, we would probably have nightmares. The supervisor here says we just have to take down the information and then go home and leave the job behind, and that's just what we do."

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DIANE COYLE and COLIN BROWN

Interest rates will have to rise if the Government wants to hit its inflation target, of 2.5 per cent, said Chancellor Kenneth Clarke yesterday - and the sooner the better.

Chief economist Mervyn King made the Bank of England's views plain: "The question will be when to raise interest rates." However, inflation is likely to fall from its current 2.8 per cent in the short term.

He added that it would be preferable to raise base rates sooner rather than later. "The longer we leave it, the further they will have to move."

Asked if he thought Mr Clarke would agree, Mr King said: "I rather imagine he would not wish to join the club of Chancellors after whom excessive booms have been named."

The Bank's quarterly Inflation Report predicted that with no change in policy there is a worse-than-even chance of inflation staying below its 2.5 per cent target in two years' time. The outlook was worse than in the May report because the Chancellor had cut a quarter point from base rates in June, against the Governor's advice.

Yesterday's report also warned that the Government is running too big a budget deficit. It said high borrowing requirements "cannot be reconciled with hitting the inflation target as well as maintaining a sustainable fiscal position."

Business reactions, page 15

CONTENTS

Section 1	Section 2
BUSINESS & CITY	15-19
COMMENT	11-13
CROSSWORD	26
EDUCATION	12-14
GAZETTE	14
LEADING ARTICLES	11
LETTERS	11
SHARES	18
UNIT TRUSTS	19
WEATHER	25



Martian meteorite: Scientists have found 'startling' evidence to suggest life beyond Earth, but not everyone is over the moon

Mars find puts life back into space race

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Editor

Scientists and religious thinkers were digesting the news yesterday that traces of organic chemicals – so tiny that thousands would fit on a full stop – are "evidence for primitive life on early Mars".

The news might lead to a funding boost for space trips to Mars, and possibly to international efforts to bring back samples from the planet. But religious commentators suggest

that the news would make no difference to their beliefs.

The remains were found in a meteorite and appear to be molecules known as PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), which could have been made by primitive bacteria and single-celled organisms. These might have existed billions of years ago beneath the surface of Mars. PAHs are found on Earth in fossil sediments, where they are formed by bacteria.

The discovery was made by a team of six scientists at the US

space agency Nasa, who found the traces of chemicals deep inside the four-billion-year-old rock. "We don't claim that we have conclusively proven life on Mars," said one of the scientists, Everett Gibson, at a press conference in Washington. "We are putting this evidence out to the scientific community for other investigators to verify, enhance, attack – dispute if they can – as part of the scientific process."

The work will be published next week in the academic journal

Nature. It built on earlier work by a team at the Open University in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. "We have been working on this meteorite, and did some work with the Nasa authors," said Colin Pillinger, professor of planetary sciences yesterday.

The largest fossil is less than a hundredth of the width of a human hair, and most are about a thousandth of that size. Some are egg-shaped, and others tubular, but the team said that they are "strikingly similar" to

those from tiny bacteria found on Earth.

The new research could accelerate plans for a manned spaceflight to Mars, and attract funds that Nasa and independent groups say are needed for thorough exploration. Nasa already plans a \$150m (£97m) trip by an automated spacecraft, due to lift off this November, to land on the planet next July.

Nasa's administrator Daniel Goldin called the discovery "startling". He recently suggested that samples should be brought back from the planet by 2003.

The research does not give any indication of whether any life has survived on Mars, or whether it has evolved. If there is life there, it is probably deep underground – perhaps up to 1,000 metres below the surface, which is bombarded with harsh ultraviolet rays and has an average temperature of -23 C. "We are not talking about little green men," said Mr Goldin.

However, a number of scientists were wary of welcoming

the news in advance of the paper's publication. Christian de Duve, a Belgian scientist who is a Nobel laureate and an expert on life in the Universe, said yesterday: "Obviously this is extremely exciting news, but I don't like to comment without having more information."

Among religious groups, reactions to the suggestion of life on another planet were mixed. A spokesman for the Catholic Church said: "There is no proof yet but if there were, then it would cause some sort of rethink." A Church of England spokesman said: "We believe that God created the whole universe so I don't think there could be a problem."

Other scientists – including some at Nasa – cast doubt on the findings. Jack Farmer, a geologist and paleobiologist of the Exobiology Branch of Nasa's Ames Research Center in California, said, "If that's the evidence, I don't believe it... PAHs have no direct relationship to biology. They are not an indicator."

Will space yield up its mysteries?

How do we know the meteorite came from Mars? The unusual balance of various elements in the meteorite (called ALH84001) indicates that it was not formed on Earth. Also, it must have spent some time in space because it contains radioactive versions of common elements not found on Earth.

When did it arrive on Earth? About 13,000 years ago, after being thrown into space from Mars by a major asteroid impact about 15 million years ago.

What exactly have the Nasa scientists found? The rock contains tiny fractures, thought to have occurred when it was on Mars. These fractures contain clear signs of molecules known as PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) – the first such molecules ever seen in a Martian rock. Scientists reckon that PAHs are formed either inside stars or by living organisms such as bacteria. Many have been found in Earth sediments.

Why weren't these signs found earlier? ALH84001 was discovered in 1984, but not recognised as being from Mars until 1994. It is one of only 12 Martian meteorites known. "Three years isn't a long time to find something like this," said Jamie Gilmour, research fellow in earth sciences at Manchester University.

Is everyone convinced this is evidence of life on Mars? Many are holding back until they know more. The scientific paper is not due to be published until next week. Carl Sagan, the US astronomer, said the findings "are not evidence of life". John Kerridge, a planetary scientist at the University of California, San Diego, said: "The conclusion is at best premature and more probably

wrong. The PAHs are just not a reliable biomarker."

Could the "Mars life" actually have come from Earth?

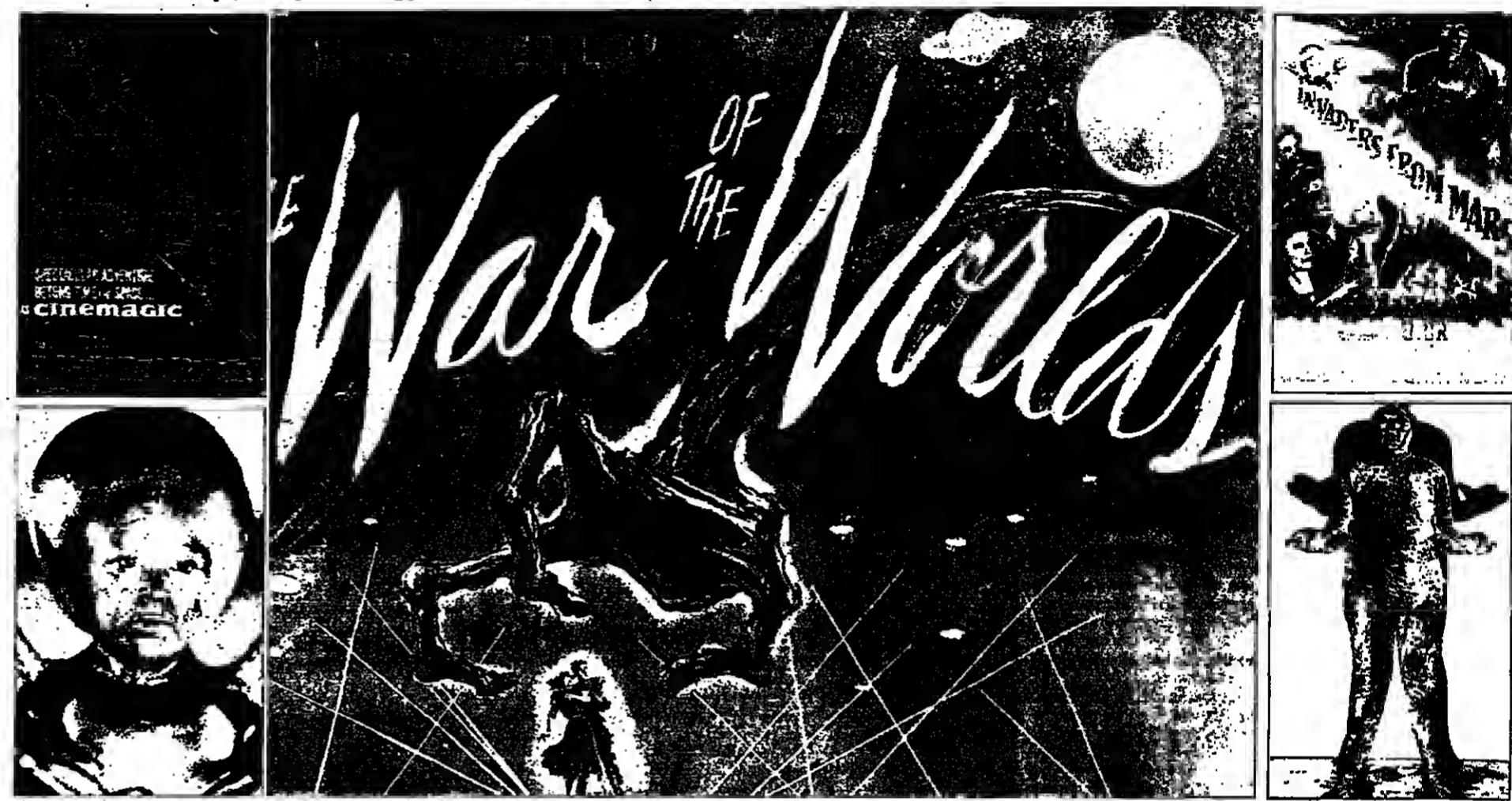
The possibility that the meteorite was contaminated with Earth organisms was a major question for the Nasa scientists. They provide a number of reasons refuting it. The key one is that the PAHs were more numerous towards the centre of the meteorite than outside it.

Could this just be a publicity drive by Nasa to attract funding for Mars missions? Possibly, but it's unlikely. Nasa said recently that it lacks the funds to realise plans to launch a spacecraft to Mars every two years. Before the latest results were publicised, an independent committee warned that the hunt for fossil life on the planet would require extra funding. And Nasa administrator Daniel Goldin has called on Nasa to bring back a sample from Mars by 2003.

But while the new research will make it hard for politicians to refuse requests for exploration funding, two factors suggest the findings are credible. First, the scientists involved would face ridicule if their case is overstated. Secondly, *Science* magazine – in which the work will be published – has a rigorous checking system by which independent scientists review the work. If they thought it was faked, they would have rejected the paper.

What life might exist now on Mars? Any life now on Mars is probably in suspended animation – frozen in the polar regions (of carbon dioxide) or in underground, frozen water. Possibly, there is something still alive closer to the core of Mars – but that is only conjecture.

Charles Arthur



They came from outer space: The fictional faces of our galactic 'neighbours' may have altered over the decades, but there is no change in our fascination with alien life-forms

Wild flights of fantasy on the final frontier

PETER POPHAM

It's a cliche of our fascination with the possibility that we are not alone in the universe that the discovery of the fossil of a single-cell organism that may have lived and died on Mars seven million years ago is the stuff of front-page splashes.

If that's the company we've got through all eternity, one is entitled to say, it's a pretty minor mitigation of our loneliness. But it will ensure that the search for larger, perhaps more companionable life forms, will be carried on more avidly than before.

Why does it matter so much? Why is it that practically all of us, however sceptical or consciously indifferent, experience

a flutter of excitement at the thought of extraterrestrial life? It's over 100 years since three men in New Mexico watched agast as a cigar-shaped craft hovered above them, while the 10 occupants laughed and shouted incomprehensibly, then threw several objects overboard – a flower, a piece of paper with oriental-type writing on it, a curious cup – before flying away.

The objects, as happens with tedious regularity in such cases, were later removed by a mysterious stranger. But a modern obsession had been born.

In 1898, HG Wells published *The War of the Worlds*; eight years later the American astronomer Percival Lowell published his theory that the surface

of Mars was veined with canals which the Martians had constructed to irrigate their planet with water from the polar ice-caps. The parallel projects, the literary and the scientific, were off the starting blocks.

It was exactly the sort of imaginative adventure that the 20th century required. In humanity's infancy, heaven lay all about us; what we knew was so infinitesimal, what we could only dream about so vast, that the imagination was abundantly nourished. Above were angels and archangels and all the company of heaven; across the sea beyond Finisterre and the *Ultima Thule* were lands unknown, full of inconceivable creatures and men with heads below their

shoulders. When night fell, the dark was populated by ghosts.

Even in a universe governed by the God of the Christians, there was plenty of room for enjoyably alarming speculation.

With the maturing of knowledge in the 18th and 19th centuries, however, shades of the prison door fell across humanity's dreaming. There is a paradox here: the more breathtaking the discoveries and the stories of the intellectual pioneers, the more arid, in consequence, grew the landscape of the popular imagination.

Humanity evolved from the apes, and the rest of "creation" came about in the same way? Bang went God, and the angels and archangels with Him. Char-

acter was formed through sexual experiences in infancy? That put paid to the soul, and doubtless to ghosts as well. History was a process of endless struggle between social classes? So much for the great heroes, the supermen of history.

Meanwhile modern navigation and transport ensured that no significant stone on the planet was left unturned, no nation or tribe undiscovered or undocumented. There was very little left to dream about.

But just when it seemed that things had got about as factual and mechanical and circumscribed as they possibly could, the human mind executed an amazing double somersault, and with one leap it was free.

God may be dead, and the Earth as good as, but with the advent of manned flight, suddenly there was a vast new frontier to dream about.

There seems no reason to suppose that our fondness for dreaming about outer space and encountering its denizens will slacken now that a grain of truth has apparently been discovered in all the speculation: like the grit in an oyster, it can only encourage them.

Likewise, it is unlikely to shake the religious belief of those whose faith has survived the assaults of science. In any case, belief in God and in aliens seems to coexist quite easily: a majority of Americans, for example, believes firmly in both.

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news

Britain's chuddie-chewing youngsters have a stonking time

Promiscuous girls described as "slappers", bores labelled "anoraks" and hard-working pupils dubbed "boffins" may soon be officially defined in the *Oxford Dictionary*.

The latest what's-in-and-what's-out survey of secondary school parlance, conducted by

Dillons Bookstore and Oxford Dictionaries, has discovered a whole new language.

The sample of 600 pupils has thrown up "babe", an attractive boy or girl; "geek", an unappealing, boring person, and "hardo", someone who thinks he is tough.

The words will be now be considered for inclusion in the latest *Oxford Dictionary*, recognised as defining modern English.

Other words creeping into the schoolspeak of 11- to 18-year-olds include "fit" - a slim, attractive girl or boy; "blif" - a cigarette; "cringe" - embrar-

rassingly unfashionable; and "cod" - admirable or good.

"Shrapnel" is used among the young to describe loose change, "pukka" means unruffled and stylish, "rooted" means horble-looking and a "triphead" is someone who makes no sense.

If you are going ooo a "blat",

that's a short bicycle ride; if you want some "chuddle", it's chewing gum; and a "dappy" is an unintelligent, sad person.

A "rooka" is a spot of piss, "pants" is creeping in as a swear word, and if you have had a "stonking" time at a party, it has been excellent.

Regional variations made a strong showing in the survey.

Youngsters in north-east England would think anyone using the words "cringe", "geek" or "pukka" was a real "anorak".

"Boy" - meaning boyfriend

- is considered deeply unfashionable in Peterborough and Lancashire, but is acceptable elsewhere in the country.

A "wuss" - wimp, or feeble person - is falling out of use in Ipswich, but is still used strongly in Gloucestershire. And in Lancashire, you are unlikely to be understood if you describe someone as a "divvy" - a fool.

Michael Profitt from Oxford Dictionaries would not be drawn on which words would be included in the new dictionary.

"It is impossible to tell which words will last ... it is in the nature of fashion that what is indispensable one year may be rejected the next," he said.

Cheap deals: Last-minute giveaways scarce as tour companies vow not to repeat last summer's suicidal discounts.

Package holiday bargains sell out

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Anyone looking to match 1995's last-minute package holiday giveaways could be left kicking their heels at home, according to two of Britain's largest tour operators.

Airtours and Thomas Cook believe that a combination of discounts for early bookers and a sharp fall in the number of holidays on offer has foiled the bargainer hunters.

Harry Coe, the finance director at Airtours, said that lower capacity had led to fewer bookings - down 16 per cent on last year - but that it had also put an end to the suicidal discounts that had stung the industry last summer.

"If you walked down the high street last weekend and looked at the prices being demanded for departures in August, you'd see prices were £60 higher than the case at the same time last year."

'If you walked down the high street you'd see prices were £60 higher than last year'

means customers have found it increasingly difficult to buy the holiday they want. As a result of smaller discounts, many are plumping to pay full price for a named hotel they can see pictures of rather than take a chance on an unnamed venue for a saving of maybe only £40.

The tone was set for this summer when Thomson introduced "fluid pricing" last autumn. It rewarded early bookings with discounts and promised higher prices as summer approached. The threat to lawmakers was that hanging on would increase the cost rather than throw up the bargains they had come to expect.

A spokesman at Thomson said: "It was such an obvious idea, it is amazing really that no one had thought of it before."

Airtours

added a new twist to the cut-throat battle for a share of the package market this season when it launched its summer 1997 brochures at the beginning of July, before many holidaymakers had left for this year's trip. The move caused a furore in the travel business, with agents com-

plaining they were being forced to sell holidays for three seasons at the same time.

Yesterday, however, Airtours claimed the tactic had been an overwhelming success, giving it over half as many discounts this year as in 1995, with much smaller price reductions.

In recent years the holiday market has been dogged by job insecurity, hot summers at home and an increasing weariness with tacky, over-developed holiday destinations. Now more upmarket holidays, including long-haul trips and cruises, are the most buoyant area of the market.

Tour operators are still licking their wounds from a disastrous 1995, when 10 million holidays failed to find enough buyers.

By August last year the likes of Airtours, First Choice and Thomson were giving away breaks at prices that barely covered aircraft charter and hotel block booking.

Profits at leading companies plunged and they vowed last autumn not to make the same mistake again. This summer, capacity has been cut to 8.5 million holidays. Mr Coe said it

was a potential deathtrap, with only one out of 39 recently inspected reaching a satisfactory overall level, according to a survey by the Consumers' Association.

Most disturbing of all, the findings were slightly worse than in the association's last survey four years ago, when legislation came in to make tour operators legally responsible for the safety of the hotels that they use.

The report found serious safety flaws in swimming pools, fire precautions, children's play areas, lifts and balconies in two favourite destinations for Britons, Turkey and Gran Canaria.

Analysts said the holiday companies appeared to have made a better fist of matching supply and demand this year but they questioned whether the industry had really cured itself of its volatility. Rising profits, they said, would lead inevitably to more capacity, increasing competition and the return of the last-minute bargain.

There seems to be some breakdown in how tour opera-

tors are keeping the hotels up to scratch."

She added: "Some of these hotels are death traps - how many people must be maimed or killed before tour operators will take their responsibilities seriously?"

Among the findings were that nine out of 19 pools inspected at hotels in Gran Canaria were dangerous; three Turkish hotels had dangerous pools and 11 had pools which rated as poor.

Seven out of 20 Turkish hotels had fire safety problems and only four out of 16 hotels in Turkey were found to have satisfactory lifts.

One hotel in Puerto Rico, Gran Canaria, had no fire alarm

at all. A member of staff allegedly told inspectors: "If there's a fire, we shout."

Other problems included hotel corridors - one of them 48 metres long - with dead ends.

The one hotel which passed all inspections was the Sol Fulya in Side, Turkey, used by Thomson, First Choice and Sunworld.

In the previous survey carried out four years ago, only four hotels out of 42 were found to be satisfactory in respect of fire safety.

The Federation of Tour Operators (FTO), which represents most of the largest holiday firms, said it was "nonsense" to

paint a picture of little or no improvement in hotel safety standards. A spokesman said:

"We feel that the language and tone of this report is unfortunate and shrill, and we regret that."

He said that companies had made huge efforts on improving safety standards, including producing an educational video for hotel owners, and staging road shows in different resorts about hotel safety.

Keith Bettom, head of corporate affairs at the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), which also represents tour operators, said: "We are surprised to see these results bearing in mind the fact that tour operators spend millions of

pounds in safety inspections. As safety is a top priority, these allegations will be fully investigated. If the claims are true, the problems will be rectified as soon as possible."

Despite the apparent slump in standards reported by *Holiday Which?*, there are no signs of a recent leap in the numbers of those complaining or taking legal action. The number of complaints about package holidays made to ABTA remains constant at around one per thousand holidays. The overall figure for the industry as a whole is estimated at around one per cent.

The FTO's chairman, Martin Brackenbury, said: "This is a cynical attempt by the Com-

sumers' Association to peddle simplistic solutions to very complex problems."

FTO members invest more than £1.2m a year in employing British safety professionals and consultants to carry out inspections and provides loans for hoteliers to make improvements.

"Statistics prove that it is already much safer to take a package holiday than to stay at home and as standards rise all over the world it will continue to be so," said Mr Brackenbury.

Hotels were not used if inspectors had rejected them as insufficiently safe and significant progress had been made, he added.

The FTO stated that it was conducting further investigations in order to verify the situation following the *Holiday Which?* allegations, which were being disputed.

A spokesman added: "Initial findings suggest that *Holiday Which?* is not correct in some of their assessments and we reiterate that hotels are not used if inspectors reject them as being unsafe."

Sea view: The beach at Deauville, Normandy, is prepared for the new season which begins this weekend. Despite a fall in holiday bookings in Britain this year, discounts have decreased and the long-haul flight market has expanded.

Photograph: Brian Harris

Dangerous pools, faulty lifts and fire risks still hallmark of Costa Deathtrap

MICHAEL STREETER

Some holiday hotels abroad are a potential deathtrap, with only one out of 39 recently inspected reaching a satisfactory

overall level, according to a survey by the Consumers' Association.

Most disturbing of all, the findings were slightly worse than in the association's last survey four years ago, when legislation came in to make tour operators legally responsible for the safety of the hotels that they use.

The report found serious safety flaws in swimming pools, fire precautions, children's play areas, lifts and balconies in two favourite destinations for Britons, Turkey and Gran Canaria.

Kim Winter, acting deputy editor of the Consumers' Association's *Holiday Which?* magazine that contains the report said: "Following our last major survey there is very little difference, the same old problems keep cropping up.

The report found serious safety flaws in swimming pools, fire precautions, children's play areas, lifts and balconies in two favourite destinations for Britons, Turkey and Gran Canaria.

Analysts said the holiday companies appeared to have made a better fist of matching supply and demand this year but they questioned whether the industry had really cured itself of its volatility. Rising profits, they said, would lead inevitably to more capacity, increasing competition and the return of the last-minute bargain.

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'We came for work and education, the sky was clouded. But it got better - and is getting better for all of us'

The largest survey of Britain's ethnic minorities charts changing society. **Rebecca Fowler** reports

The first image that struck Ruhun Chowdhury, 29, when she stepped off a plane from Bangladesh with just a smattering of English were the greys and the silence. But she was determined to begin a new life with her relatives, who had dreamed of a land of education and employment.

Mrs Chowdhury is one of 3.2 million people in Britain who have struggled to keep their culture while pursuing their dream, according to the largest study of ethnic minorities in Britain, published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics.

Alongside a quarter of all Bangladeshis living in Britain, Mrs Chowdhury's home is in Tower Hamlets, east London. She has a house near Brick Lane which bustles with traders selling familiar Asian fruits, fish and spices and wholesalers displaying brightly coloured fabrics.

Mrs Chowdhury said: "We came in February 1980 for work and for education. The sky was clouded, it was so dark and I thought, this is England. Of course it got better, and it's getting better for all of us."

Unlike the majority of the Bangladeshi community, she has quickly mastered English. She said: "I know language is power. I can get what I want, I can fight for things. A lot of women in this area can't do that. They're living in a closed community where they worry what the neighbours will say if they even come out of the house on their own."

She added: "Many of these women come from very rural villages in Bangladesh, where only the boys would be educated, if a woman goes out there's still a feeling she's too good, she's learning, she's getting smart."

When Mrs Chowdhury first started visiting Bangladeshi families, urging them to send their daughters to school to learn English, they would tell her she was destroying their culture and slam the door in her face.

A decade on, she is optimistic of change. Now, even the most traditional people stand and listen to what she has to say.

For many the change is coming gradually. Mrs Chowdhury

Snapshots of life for Britain's ethnic minorities

The survey by the Office for National Statistics is the most wide-ranging study of ethnic minority groups in the UK. Its findings show that:

- In spring 1995, 3.2 million people belonged to an ethnic minority – slightly under 6 per cent of the population and up from just over three million four years earlier.
- One in eight black households in England and Wales was burgled in 1993 – twice the proportion in both the Pakistani/Bangladeshi and white groups.
- More than half of black Caribbean children were living in a single-parent family in 1991.
- Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people had the highest unemployment rates – 24 per cent and 27 per cent respectively – compared with 12 per cent for Indians and just 8 per cent for whites in 1995.

■ The ethnic minority population is concentrated in certain areas, with 25 per cent of all Bangladeshis in Britain living in the London borough of Tower Hamlets.

■ South Asian groups – Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis – have much higher proportions of married couples than any other ethnic group.

■ Bangladeshi women are on average 21 years old on marriage, compared with 33 for black Caribbean women and 27 for whites.

■ Cohabitation varies widely, with black Caribbean males far more likely to be cohabitating than their white counterparts.

■ Ability to speak English varies, with only one in 10 Bangladeshi women between 50 and 74 able to do so and less than two-thirds of the Bangladeshi community as a whole being English-speakers.

Vagrant ruled out as murder suspect

LOUISE JURY

A vagrant accused of raping and murdering a British schoolgirl in France was released from custody yesterday. His lawyer said he was no longer a suspect.

Patrice Pade, 39, was arrested in connection with the death of Caroline Dickinson, 13, at Pleine Fougeres, Brittany, three weeks ago and was reported to have confessed to the killing.

His lawyer, René Blanchard, secured his release yesterday before the examining magistrate, Gérard Zaag, after DNA tests failed to support the charge against his client.

Mr Pade was freed on condition that he stays at an address given to the authorities. Mr Blanchard said: "I think the authorities acted too fast. The police went too quickly but not the investigating magistrate."

"My client is no longer a suspect. He will have to speak to police again on various matters but I am very pleased with the way this has turned out."

The development has shocked residents of Pleine Fougeres, near Mont-St Michel.

Caroline was on a school trip to Brittany with Launceston College, Cornwall, when she was found dead on her mattress in the dormitory she was sharing with four others at a youth hostel.

Yesterday, as Mr Pade left jail



Caroline Dickinson: Killed on school trip in France

of three with a history of sexual offences, has allegedly admitted he did it. Officially, no connection has been made between the two murders.

Christian Couet, the Mayor of Pleine Fougeres, who attended Caroline's funeral in Cornwall, expressed dismay at the development. "When someone is arrested and confesses the crime that he is suspected of, there is no reason to doubt him," he said.

Other people were questioned after Mr Pade's arrest but the townsfolk believed the investigators were simply putting the finishing touches to the inquiry. Mr Couet said: "Besides, these further interviews appear not to have provided any further clues."

But the manager of a hotel 200m from the youth hostel where the murder took place said many villagers had had their doubts.

The man, who did not give his name, said: "The fact that Patrice Pade is not the rapist does not surprise us at all. From the start, this arrest always seemed bizarre to us; it was all too swift, too easy."

When news of the DNA test results emerged on Thursday, Caroline's parents, John and Sue Dickinson, expressed dismay that the "small consolation" gained from the quick arrest was to be denied them.

Michel Bazarowski, a father

Top 11 in 150

news



Taking the veil: A young Asian woman tries on a wedding outfit at Damini's clothes shop in east London. The average age for Asian brides is 21.

Photograph: Tom Pilston

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news

Bronze Age high-rise comes home to Loch Tay with a house on stilts



Final straw: Thatchers at work on a crannog in Loch Tay, Tayside. The house is the first reconstruction of a traditional loch dwelling, which have housed extended families throughout the Scottish highlands since the Bronze Age. Six volunteers have worked on the project for two years, using only natural materials and traditional building methods. This week, they will thatch the roof of the crannog to finish the project.

Photograph: Colin McPherson

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international

Afrikaners trek into wilderness of Mozambique

MARY BRAID
Johannesburg

For the past 18 months, South Africa's Afrikaner farmers have been trekking in small groups across the country's northern border, re-enacting the Great Trek of their 19th-century ancestors into the interior, to escape British rule.

They have travelled to remote rural outposts of Mozambique, Zambia and the Congo, some driven by racist pique following the overthrow of apartheid, others by despair at the violent social unrest which has accompanied South Africa's transition to democracy.

Yesterday the South African government took advantage of the dissatisfaction of these white farmers to unveil an agreement with Mozambique to settle them in Lichinga, in northern Mozambique.

The move is part of the new South Africa's attempts to strengthen the economies of its neighbours. It has already helped build a road to Mozambique and a highway to Namibia through Botswana, which is ironic, as the old apartheid

regime spent much of its energies weakening its neighbours.

Through the setting of 24 farmers in Lichinga, alongside scores of others doing it for themselves elsewhere in northern Mozambique, the two countries hope to establish an agricultural infrastructure in Mozambique. After years of civil war, the country boasts plenty of fertile land but none of the skills or equipment needed to take advantage of it.

Post-apartheid South Africa expects to benefit from the region's economic improvements. And by strengthening its eastern neighbour, which is one of the world's poorest countries, it may also stem the flow of illegal immigrants who are exacerbating South Africa's own economic problems.

Mozambique hopes to benefit from the strengthening of its agricultural base, which was ravaged by war, and by the predicted creation of 28,000 jobs.

Despite its fertile soil it imports 281,000 tons of cereals a year. The World Food Programme is engaged in an emergency feeding project for 200,000 people in Mozambique.

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KANSAS DAYS

Russell keeps faith with its favourite son

Driving west from Kansas City on Interstate 70, you run a veritable gauntlet of celebrity to reach Russell, Kansas, the place Bob Dole believes to be the moral centre of America. You pass the hometowns of three astronauts no less, before encountering the Agriculture Hall of Fame and then the Greyhound Hall of Fame ("A Racer, A Hero, A Pet, A Friend"). But finally after three hours across the prairie you make it.

Russell, according to the pre-packaged mythology no presidential candidate can now do without, is Bob Dole. Forget Washington and the Congress where he spent his most productive years. This was where he was born and raised. To Russell he returned in 1945, a premature war veteran of just 22, crippled and half killed by wounds suffered in Italy. Here you can still see the drug store where they collected \$1,800 - a vast sum in those days - to send Bob Dole to Chicago to see the spe-



Bob Dole: Perfect specimen of small-town America

cialist who would put his body and soul together again.

It was in Russell last year that he formally declared his candidacy. Here he returned last month to celebrate (if that is the right word) his 73rd birthday, and here this Saturday he will present his vice-presidential running mate to the world. All will be recounted in a misty sepia-tinted video of a remarkable life that will be the backdrop to the convention in San Diego, and whose location shooting took place here the morning after he turned 73.

Bill Clinton is still fond of depicting himself as the man from Hope, Arkansas. But Bob Dole is the man from Russell, an even more perfect specimen of a half-vanished, eternally decent small-town America, cloaked in innocence, friendliness and God.

And as a stage set the town is perfect. On a hot midsummer day, hardly a soul stirr on the broad, wide streets, lined with two- or three-story brick buildings. But Dole is everywhere. Every shop on Main Street is festooned with Dole insignia,

and so too are the billboards of restaurants and motels are made over to bappy birthday signs - even the old Dream moviehouse, closed now but still smart painted in ochre and pale blue, pays its tribute. Mostly the posters and photographs show a younger Dole in his fifties, kindly sidestepping the age issue that is his greatest handicap.

Beyond, to the north and south, east and west, the ramrod straight avenues merge back into the vast plains. "Russell, Kansas, home of Bob Dole," proclaims the sign on the white grain silo standing sentinel over the railway line on the north side of town, just a stone's throw from the Dole family home at 1035, Maple Street, but somehow on the very edge of civilisation.

As a makeshift museum of old oilfield equipment which you see when you hit town from the Interstate suggests, what passes for the golden age of Russell is long gone. But even now the place looks relatively prosperous; the stillness is of peace, not desperation; of people who will not easily be moved. Dole's sister still lives on Maple Street. Her sibling's importance has earned her the protection of the police, parked close by in a couple of cars, one marked and one unmarked, both surely basking under the midday sun. An old cottonwood tree on the corner provides shade. White plastic deckchairs surround a side porch. The unostentatious but immaculately kept red-brick structure with its American flag implanted in the lawn bespeaks the chosen virtues of Kansas, Russell and Bob Dole, of thrift and toil, plainspeaking and patriotism.

But will these values be enough? "It would be nice if you could all come to the inauguration," he told a crowd of L500 people (out of a town population of under 5,000) assembled for a cakes-and-ice cream birthday rally in Russell's one park, an occasion as scripted and soulless as most of the Dole campaign thus far. Right now, a trip halfway across the continent looks about as probable as the reopening of the Dream movie house. Instead, come January, a more likely pilgrimage beckons. Almost 100 miles north-west - but still within the great state of Kansas - lies another small town called Norton. There, on the mezzanine floor of the First State Bank on 105 West Main Street, another hall of fame of sorts is to be found. It is the Gallery of Also Rans, a former museum of candidates who ran for president and lost. Barring a miracle, a section devoted to the man from Russell will soon be joining them.

Rupert Cornwell

Sydney students take to the road over education cuts

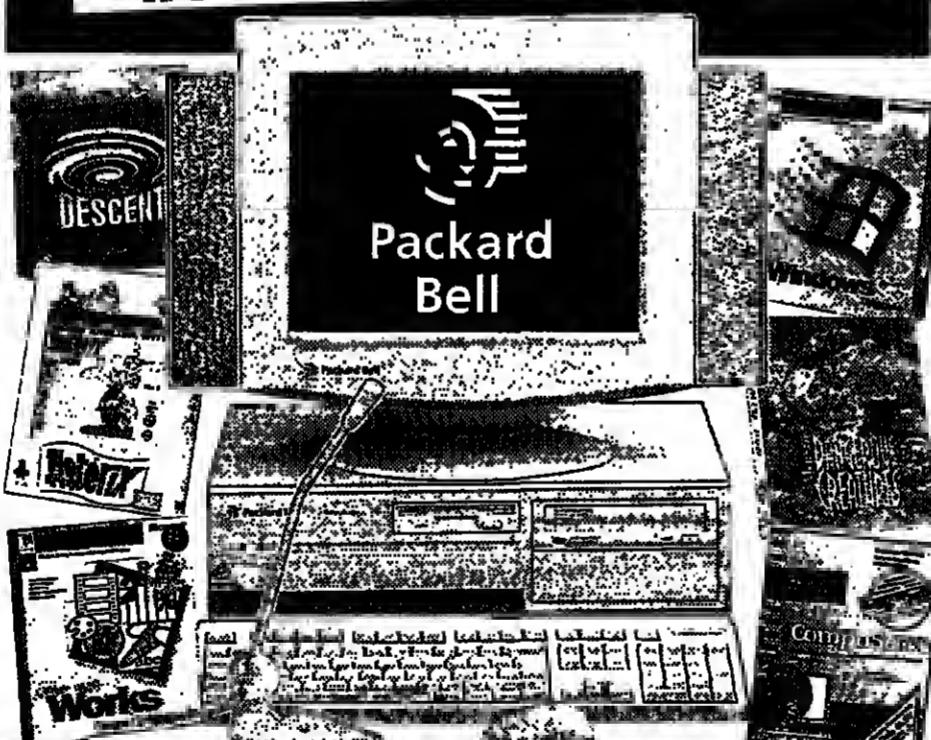


University challenge: Thousands of student demonstrators marched through the streets of Sydney yesterday, bringing city traffic to a standstill. The students, who were challenging government cuts in tertiary education budgets, converged on the Liberal Party's headquarters. Photograph: Reuter

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international

'1997 defence' blocks Hong Kong extradition

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's judicial system has been undermined by a ruling in the London High Court which blocks an extradition to the colony on the grounds that its legal system might not remain intact after China takes over next year.

It comes as a growing number of defendants overseas have started using the "1997 defence" to avoid being tried in Hong Kong.

Yesterday, the Hong Kong government remained silent on Tuesday's High Court ruling, saying it had not yet studied the judgement. It also appears to be turning to a blind eye to rulings in United States and Canadian courts which may also undermine the authority of the colony's judiciary.

By coincidence, 11 foreign prisoners serving long sentences in Hong Kong jails yesterday asked Amnesty International to help them secure transfer to Britain for the remainder of their sentences, as they fear their cases may be reopened under Chinese rule.

Last year, an American court ruled that a negligence claim relating to events in Hong Kong could be heard in the US, because there was no guarantee that the colony's courts would properly apply 1997.

However, the decision in the High Court is far more damaging, as it comes from the power that signed a treaty with China guaranteeing that Hong Kong's way of life would not change for 50 years after the Chinese takeover.

Lord Justice Henry said the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, had misdirected himself when he ordered the extradition to Hong Kong of Ewan Launder, 60, a banker accused of bribery and corruption offences. Mr Launder's lawyers argued that under Chinese rule he might face the death penalty for these offences.

The judge said Mr Howard was wrong to overrule Mr Launder's concerns about China's

legal system, although Britain and China had agreed on the preservation of the system in Hong Kong. He said the Home Secretary's decision had been dictated by a collective cabinet decision, made "without regard to the consequent risks to his [Mr Launder's] life and liberty".

Mr Howard is appealing to the House of Lords, while Mr Launder, who has been fighting extradition since 1993, remains in jail.

At least three other extradition cases have been bogged down by the "1997 defence". In New Zealand, a former Hong Kong public prosecutor, Warwick Reid, is fighting extradition for fraud and conspiracy charges on the grounds that he would not obtain a fair trial under Chinese rule. In the US Jerry Lui, a former British American Tobacco executive in Hong Kong, is resisting extradition on the grounds that he "would be tried and punished by one of the most notorious, totalitarian, human-rights violators on the face of the earth", according to his lawyer.

In Canada a murder suspect, Chan Chui-mei, is using the "1997 defence" to appeal against an extradition order.

Paul Harris, a barrister who leads the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor group, says: "It will be a very interesting barometer of the Hong Kong climate if these cases are upheld."

He says China is infringing its new constitution for Hong Kong, and that with "every frightening statement by the Chinese, the day comes nearer when a court in Britain or the

US says there is a risk someone won't get a fair trial".

A spokesman for the legal department said that to date no court had found a charge of sovereignty provided "circumstances which would prevent the grant of extradition".

The 11 foreign prisoners, from Nigeria, Pakistan and Nepal, meanwhile, have appealed for transfer to British prisons. Peter Barnes, their lawyer, says they fear "their sentences might be reopened for much greater penalties".

Chinese dance to a tune from Madame Mao

From the organisers' point of view, the timing of the applause was a potential political minefield. But as Peking this week hosted its first performance for two decades of the Cultural Revolution classic Chinese ballet, the *White-Haired Girl*, the authorities need not have been so uptight. The audience, nowadays keen followers of paramount statesman Deng Xiaoping's edict that "To get rich is glorious", dutifully clapped at all the right places: when the evil landlord and his sidekick were beaten by vengeful peasants, when the female heroine was reunited with her Eighth Route Army soldier, and as the symbolic red sun rose above the horizon.

The return of the *White-Haired Girl* ballet has proved an interesting barometer of contemporary political correctness in Peking. As one of only eight "model" shows permitted by Madame Mao during the Cultural Revolution, anyone over the age of 25 has probably seen the *White-Haired Girl*, and anyone over the age of 40 will have seen her many times. As well as the ballet, there was the original opera, the film, and the folk dance interpretation. Yet on Tuesday, the first night of this Peking ballet revival, the house was packed, and only the ticket-touts outside would have been scandalised Madame Mao.

The plot is straightforward. Xi'er, a peasant girl, sees her father beaten to death by the landlord because he cannot pay his debts. She is forced to work in the cruel landlord's home, runs away to the forest, and is rescued three years later when her village is liberated by the Communist troops; the landlord and his henchman are subsequently executed. By then, such have been Xi'er's sufferings that her long black hair has turned completely white.

The difficulties of theatre revivals are well-known. But this one poses extra challenges. A debate on the morality of Chinese youth was sparked last year when an opera version of the *White-Haired Girl* was performed in Peking, and some young Chinese were quoted in the media as saying it was proper for the landlord to demand repayment of the debt. "Thanks to the introduction of a market economy, young Chinese are becoming business-oriented, and their comment reflects the philosophy of business," the official *China Daily* noted

disapprovingly at the time. As a result, in the run up to this week's first night, the organisers have been so on edge: anyone might have thought that the ballet company was about to perform one of China's most daring pieces of political theatre. The officials cancelled interviews with foreign journalists, refused to discuss changes to the ballet, and admitted that it was all too "sensitive" because of the show's links with the Cultural Revolution. "There are changes, but all have been for artistic requirements," was all one official would admit.

In a country where all mention in the media of this year's 30th anniversary of the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution has been banned, it was left to the audience to show that some Chinese can adopt a more mature approach to recent history. Waiting for the theatre doors to open, Wang Lizhu, 41, said he had seen the *White-Haired Girl* at least three times during the Cultural Revolution. "At that time, there were not many artistic activities, and I and my friends thought the quality of the model works was quite high," he said. Would it be good for the moral education of his 12-year-old daughter, whom he had brought to the theatre? "Useless," Mr Wang laughed. "Children do not know anything about the exploitation of the old landlords or the oppression before Liberation. As for students who are older, at high school and university, some thought that because Xi'er's father owed money to the landlord, he must pay. From those opinions, you can see that this play cannot now have any political function. It is rather out of date."

Jiang Yucjiao, a 20-year-old student from Sichuan province, said her school textbook had included an extract from the story. "I do not sympathise with the landlord, although my grandfather was also a landlord. It was the feudal society that made Xi'er's father owe so much money. In the correct society, he would never owe such a large amount of money."

From another generation, one serious-faced 40-year-old man said he had seen the *White-Haired Girl* at least 10 times, on "organised" trips. And why had he come back for more? "I am not sure," he said.

By the end of the performance, the audience was pleased with the dancing but many described the story as "irrelevant" or "old-fashioned". Ou Jiaming, a ballet critic, said it was China's best chore-

Photograph: Will Burgess

Red revival: Opening night of the *White-Haired Girl*. It was one of Madame Mao's eight 'model' shows, but seems out of step with young Chinese

dancers. The plot is straightforward. Xi'er, a peasant girl, sees her father beaten to death by the landlord because he cannot pay his debts. She is forced to work in the cruel landlord's home, runs away to the forest, and is rescued three years later when her village is liberated by the Communist troops; the landlord and his henchman are subsequently executed. By then, such have been Xi'er's sufferings that her long black hair has turned completely white.

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Ou Jiaming, a ballet critic, said it was China's best chore-

ography. "It is a focal point of Chinese ballet, whether it's the Cultural Revolution or today." As for those controversial changes which the organisers had refused to talk about, they seemed to amount to making the beginning more *pas de deux* between the two lovers.

So was it still a political event?

Wang Guoli, a 40-year-old accountant, said: "In my mind there is no political meaning now. But because children think differently from our generation, it is good to have this sort of thing. Nowadays there are too many pop songs."

Her verdict on the performance? "Quite exciting ... *Swan Lake* is not as exciting!"

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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Syria's President, Hafez al-Assad, rejected an Israeli proposal to end its occupation of south Lebanon first before making full peace with Damascus. "Syria and Lebanon first - at the same time, in the same steps."

President Assad said after talks with Egypt's President, Hosni Mubarak.

President Assad said Benjamin Netanyahu's offer, submitted via the US, raised little hope of a resumption in peace talks between the two countries which have been stalled since March. *Reuter - Alexandria*

Ethiopia and Uganda announced sanctions against Burundi as part of a regional blockade to bring down the military junta there. Tanzania cut its links to Burundi last week, blocking access to Dar es Salaam port, which handles most coffee and tea exports and 70 per cent of the oil destined for Burundi. Kenya followed suit, denying Burundi a route to Mombassa. *Reuter*

France vowed quick retaliation if its companies are affected by US sanctions against investing in Iran and Libya. Other countries have joined in the protest. EU members planned talks "in order to prepare eventual responses to American sanctions," a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said. The sanctions, aimed at Iran and Libya's oil production, on which Europe heavily depends, could affect the French oil companies Total and state-owned Elf-Aquitaine. *AP - Paris*

The United States and China finalised an accord that would remove Peking's objections to signing a treaty banning all nuclear weapons tests. But there was no sign that India was ready to accept the draft on the table at the talks. India's main opposition party, the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, urged the government to test and deploy nuclear weapons, piling pressure on the country's new leaders to block the treaty. *Reuter - Geneva*

Uganda stepped up its fight against Christian rebels with sweeping changes in the top military ranks and increased defence spending. President Museveni announced an extensive shake-up, sacking eight top officers and rearranging 23 others, in a move to boost the fight against northern insurgents. *Reuter - Kampala*

The remains of a 16th-century king and queen, possibly linked to the mysterious ruined city of Great Zimbabwe, have been uncovered in a walled citadel in South Africa's Kruger National Park. The royal couple, the first whose remains have been found in southern Africa, were found at Thulamela, in the north of the wildlife reserve. *Reuter - Johannesburg*

SWIFT CALL

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the leader page

ition

Alcohol and petrol are a killing mix

It is selfish, dangerous and morally wrong to drive after two pints of beer. Anyone who does turns their car, van, or motorbike into a killing machine. The Government should not prevaricate: it is time to cut the legal limit.

Almost everyone does it: two pints, several glasses of wine, "nothing over the top". Then, still well within the legal limit, climb behind the wheel and zoom home. But we know very well that every sip increases the chance of killing or maiming someone. Even a half of lager swilled by a sensible motorist at lunchtime raises the risk of an accident while driving back to the office in the afternoon. Concentration ebbs, judgement slows, and drivers fail to react as quickly to events on the road. Young drivers are worst. The under 25s are four times more likely to have an accident if they have drunk up to the current legal limit than if they have had no alcohol at all. But the policeman that pulls them over after several pints in the pub cannot prosecute, because they are not breaking the law.

The present permitted level of 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood – around two pints for the average bloke – is too high for someone who controls more than a ton of metal on public streets. The risk of a slight error of judgement is just too high to be acceptable, when it is so obviously avoidable.

The Scottish police want to bring the limit down to 50mg (around one pint). They say the lower limit could have prevented 213 fatal and serious drink-related accidents in Scotland between 1989 and 1993. Government figures suggest 14 lives a year could be saved in England and Wales with the lower limit – worth some restraint over that second drink, surely.

Doctors agree. The British Medical Association represents the professionals who have to stitch the victims back together again. For years they have been calling for lower limits. Now the English and Welsh police are ready to add to the clamour.

Cutting the legal limit sets the standard, sends a message, and helps police make the streets safe. Alcohol and petrol are an inflammatory mixture. Anyone who flicks the ignition after more than a few glasses of wine should be prosecuted, fined, banned from driving, and in the worst cases imprisoned.

Why doesn't the Government act now? Because politicians think they already have a "winning formula" and they want to stick with it. Nonsense. It is true that deaths on the road have fallen over the 30 years since the breath test was first introduced. But this is exactly the time to build on our success, not sit content with present levels of drink-driving. For the record, the number of drink-

related road deaths has stopped falling in recent years, and actually rose last year.

Last Christmas Steven Norris, the then Transport Minister, came up with a different excuse for avoiding a lower limit. He said it was not practical. But the Australians seem to have managed it perfectly well. Those lager-swilling Aussies have cut their legal limit, and claim substantial success in cutting their drink-driving levels as a result.

The Department of Transport seems to believe Britain is different. Mr Norris claimed: "There is no

point in setting the limit at zero or any other figure if people simply ignore it." Mr Norris is out of date. Five years ago his assessment of public support for a lower limit might have been accurate. Not any more.

Attitudes towards alcohol have changed. We don't drink and drive the way we used to 20 years ago. We don't drink and work in the same way either. The time was when colleagues who now stick to fizzy water would have tailed down the pub for several pints at lunchtime. JR used to stroll into his office each morning at Ewing Oil and hit the whisky. Clerks at the

Bank of England at the turn of the century actually had bars opened for them within Bank walls, so that alcohol could ease the strain of dull and boring work. Today employees who get sozzled over their sandwiches are frowned on. Years of drink-driving campaigns have changed people's perception of what is acceptable. In Scotland last year fewer than 1.5 per cent of the drivers stopped and tested were over the limit, compared to 19 per cent when seasonal clampdowns began a decade ago. Younger drivers are even less likely to hit the throttle after hitting the bottle: three-quarters of under-25s told recent surveys that they never drink and drive, compared to less than two-thirds of older drivers.

The police now think they can enforce a lower limit. Now that they have random breath testing, and stricter sentencing, the risks associated with getting caught over the limit are much, much higher. A one-year driving ban, for many of us, is just not worth thinking about; the inconvenience would be so immense. If the legal limit falls, most of us will drink less, partly because we accept that we ought to, and partly because of the risk of being caught. Slowly but surely we are moving towards zero tolerance of alcohol on the roads.

It has taken us a long time, but finally in Britain we are starting to

establish a mature approach to alcohol. In moderation, it is relaxing, sociable and might even be good for our health. It can be a delightful social lubrication. For that, we should enjoy it. But we should not pretend that we can drive at the same time. The Government should make our roads safer by setting standards that we all know make sense.

The ominous sound of a boom

The Ken and Eddie show is hotting up. The Bank of England approves of the last cut in interest rates. In fact, it thinks inflation may take off in two years' time unless rates go back up again soon.

We've been here before. The Bank's chief economist hopes Ken Clarke won't want to join the list of Conservative chancellors to bequeath their names to inflationary booms. But like Maudling, Barber and Lawson before him, Mr Clarke may be too optimistic about inflation or too pessimistic about the election to raise interest rates in time. How dull. There are so many economic mistakes to be made. Why do we in Britain always have to make the same one?



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Effects of abortion on the lone twin

Sir: I am a lone twin and lost my sister in the womb. I know of many other lone twins in my position and we are all testament to the fact that losing a twin *in utero* is a devastating event that affects the surviving twin deeply throughout its life, even when the survivor is not told that it was a twin ("Doctors defend abortion of twin", 5 August).

The suggestion that the child will resent its mother for causing its twin's death is only half the story, as this assumes that the child will be told about the circumstances of its birth. Even if information about the abortion of its twin is kept from the surviving child, it will nevertheless suffer the severe emotional effects of bereavement. The only difference will be that it will simply not be able to understand or explain why it has those feelings.

There have been many cases of lone twins who have not been told that they were a twin, but who have suffered intense, unexplainable feelings of bereavement and guilt all their life. They finally discover the truth after years of suffering, often when they are in therapy for depression or anxiety without an obvious cause, and only then can they finally begin to make sense of their feelings and come to terms with their loss.

Queen Charlotte's Hospital has, until this year, held the register of the Lone Twin Network, a group comprised of twins who have lost their twin at any point in their lives. I am appalled that the very hospital which has been involved with the Lone Twin Network and research into twins has now taken the decision to create a lone twin by deliberately killing one baby.

BRYONY GOODE
Clevedon, Avon

Sir: I am writing as someone who did the first research study into the effect on twins of the loss of their twin. I was horrified by the so-called solution to the problem for the single mother, overwhelmed by the expectation of twins, to have one killed *in utero*.

All the findings of the study and all the information gained since, from lone twins meeting through the Lone Twin Network, would confirm that this is an utterly inhumane decision. Surely the twins could be fostered, kept together and brought up in the knowledge that their mother wanted them, but was unable to care for them for reasons beyond her control?

Alternatively, one could be adopted and this too be made known to them both, so that they could meet up later. To kill one off because two cannot be cared for, is to deny the importance of their twintship. The one who is born will never be a singleton and will have the loss of its twin imprinted on it for the rest of its life.

JOAN WOODWARD
Psychotherapist
Birmingham

Sir: I am a single mother of twins, an unplanned pregnancy, despite contraception. Their father stated that I did not abort because I am not a teenager. I am leaving. I am not a teenager, I am over 30.

The last two years have been the most difficult of my life, but I am so glad I did not bow to pressure and abort the twins. Thanks to the generosity of a friend, who paid for some help, we survived.

Various friends old and new, the Life Organisation, and the Twins Club all rallied round and helped in many small ways which saw us through. Yet we are surviving, only just, benefits.

I am a resourceful woman and yet it is impossible for me to get back to work until my children reach school age. Lack of childcare facilities and low benefits keep women with children in poverty and unable to fulfil their potential.

Various pro-life organisations have suggested setting up a fund to ensure that no woman has to abort due to financial pressures. I wholeheartedly support this; it would have saved me two years of anguish to have had a little extra help.

FIONA KIRTON
Glastonbury
Somerset

Sir: Our history, literature and mythology are littered with tales of mothers sacrificing themselves for their children. We hold nothing more dear than a mother's love and nothing is further from that ideal than a mother saying, "I will care for this one but not for that one".

But there is another side to this story. How would a mother in these circumstances have even realised that the option to abort one twin existed? After all, we are told this is the first such operation in the country. The idea must have been presented to her by a doctor. Why would a doctor have done this? Medical reasons? It is clearly not the case that this mother was incapable of bearing children and therefore needed an abortion, as she is now continuing to term with the remaining twin.

Maybe the key is in the fact that

this was the first such operation in this country. Was there scientific kudos to be had from being the first centre to carry out the procedure?

IAIN M CLAY
Loughborough, Essex

Sir: The questions that need answering about the twin abortion case are the ones that have received the least attention:

1. Who gave the details of this case to the press?
2. What was their motive for doing so?
3. Are they going to be disciplined for breach of confidentiality and if not, why not?

MADELINE SIMMS
London NW1

Einstein's Oxford

Sir: David Bodanis ("The DIY University", 5 August) is being unfair to Oxford when he writes that Einstein "tried England, but Oxford did not take favourably to Jews..." and he ended up in Princeton.

In 1931 Einstein was elected to a Research Studentship in Christ Church for five years, with the proviso that he would spend one month every academic year in Oxford, and his annual stipend was £400 – about one-third of the full professorial salary – and free board and lodging.

Furthermore immediately after the Nazis came to power Oxford received many scores of Jewish refugees.

NIKURIT
Emeritus Professor of Physics
Oxford University

Change unfair police procedures

Sir: You report that no police officers will be prosecuted over the death of Wayne Douglas (Significant Stories, 6 August). We

have a largely white police force whose record on fair policing of the black community is very questionable and where statistics on, for instance, stop and search demonstrate that a black person's chance of being stopped are much greater than a white person's.

Furthermore, when such a death occurs the investigation is carried out by police officers themselves. While the Police Complaints Authority has a role in supervision it is police officers that carry out the real work.

An indication of the success of this system is shown by the percentage of complaints that lead to charges being preferred against police officers – only one per cent. There are no figures on the relative "success" of complaints from black people.

While many police officers are scrupulous in their investigations their role inevitably taints the investigation. The relatives of the person who has died and the black community more generally are not likely to be reassured by such an investigation that everything was done to uncover the truth.

Finally, when the case is dealt with by the coroner's court there is again an unfair system at work. For instance, the police officers themselves will be represented by lawyers as will the Metropolitan Police and both these groups will have access to all the evidence and

documents. The relatives of the person concerned will rarely, if ever, have legal aid or access to the documents and evidence.

Whilst people are dying when dealt with by the police it is time to change the procedure and time to set up a truly independent system to investigate these cases.

JONATHAN WADHAM
Director, National Council for Civil Liberties
London SE1

Design for Wales

Sir: It is well known that the Zaha Hadid design for the much-needed Cardiff Bay Opera House did not find favour amongst local people, in much the same way as Sir Christopher Wren's design for St Paul's Cathedral was rejected in 1675.

Christopher Wren's design for St Paul's was over-reliant on classical architectural features, and was not liked by the public. The new opera house, however, has effectively dismissed

my most recently published

stylistic evidence that Shakespeare in the main wrote only Act II, that the play represents the work of two authors, and that at least two adjacent "scenes" are likely to be the work of the

playwright who wrote *Tamburlaine the Great*. These findings do not essentially conflict with the received opinions of most literary scholars regarding the authorship of the play.

THOMAS MERRIAM
Basingstoke, Hampshire

American phones

Sir: Regarding the proposed changes to telephone dialling codes (report, 6 August), why is it, in America, with a population of almost 300 million, a simple three-number area code, followed by a further seven numbers, has proved to be sufficient to satisfy the demand for additional phone lines ever since it was instigated, and why could not such a system be introduced in Britain?

ALAN EARNEY
London W13

Bogus bard

Sir: In claiming that Shakespeare wrote *Act I, III, IV and V of Edward III*, Dr Eric Sams ("Much ado over 'new work' by the Bard", 6 August) has effectively dismissed

my most recently published

stylistic evidence that Shakespeare in the main wrote only Act II, that the play represents the work of two authors, and that at least two adjacent "scenes" are likely to be the work of the

playwright who wrote *Tamburlaine the Great*. These findings do not essentially conflict with the received opinions of most literary scholars regarding the authorship of the play.

THOMAS MERRIAM
Basingstoke, Hampshire

WHISTLING SPIES
Sir: Is not the shop-a-cheat principle the same as the whistle-blowing principle? Why then is this government in favour of the former but not the latter?

IEUAN LLOYD
Swansea, West Glamorgan

Olympic history repeats itself

Sir: The present outcry about Britain's poor showing in the Olympics ("Black South Africa breaks through, but Britain trails behind", 5 August) echoes with uncanny precision the controversy which raged after our athletes had performed below expectations in the 1936 Games in Berlin. The main worry was a feeling that England had somehow "gone soft", and commentators struggled to pinpoint the reasons for our decline.

One writer blamed democracy, "the subbooth which encourages mediocrity and does away with virility". Our failure in Berlin, he wrote, "should give a jolt to our national complacency. England is admittedly the mother of sport, yet the pick of her athletes have been outclassed".

Others pointed out that Britain had no effective system of national coaching, and that until British athletes got help, in the form of money and organisation, on the scale that other countries already enjoyed, they would not begin to compete. What Britain needed, wrote one former medallist, was a ministry for Health, Sport and Recreation.

The key question was this: "at what point does sport end and political manipulation begin?" Those who watched the Games in Berlin came home disconcerted by the way the Nazi passion for mass exercise had apparently toned up the entire nation, and in 1937 a delegation which went to study Hitler's system came home reporting that excessive physical education in a whole nation with the size and standing of Germany "might lead to fearful consequences for her and trouble for the entire world."

Should we remain amateurs or all turn professional? Then, as now, people found it impossible to decide.

DUFF HART-DAVIS
Uley,
Gloucestershire

Sir: I fear that Godfrey Hodgson has missed the point in his otherwise penetrating analysis of the American dream ("US takes first prize for self-delusion", 6 August).

The trend within American society, discernible before the Reagan era but undoubtedly accelerated during his presidency, was away from big government and back to individualism. Enormous public funding of any social good was and is seen to be essentially "un-American".

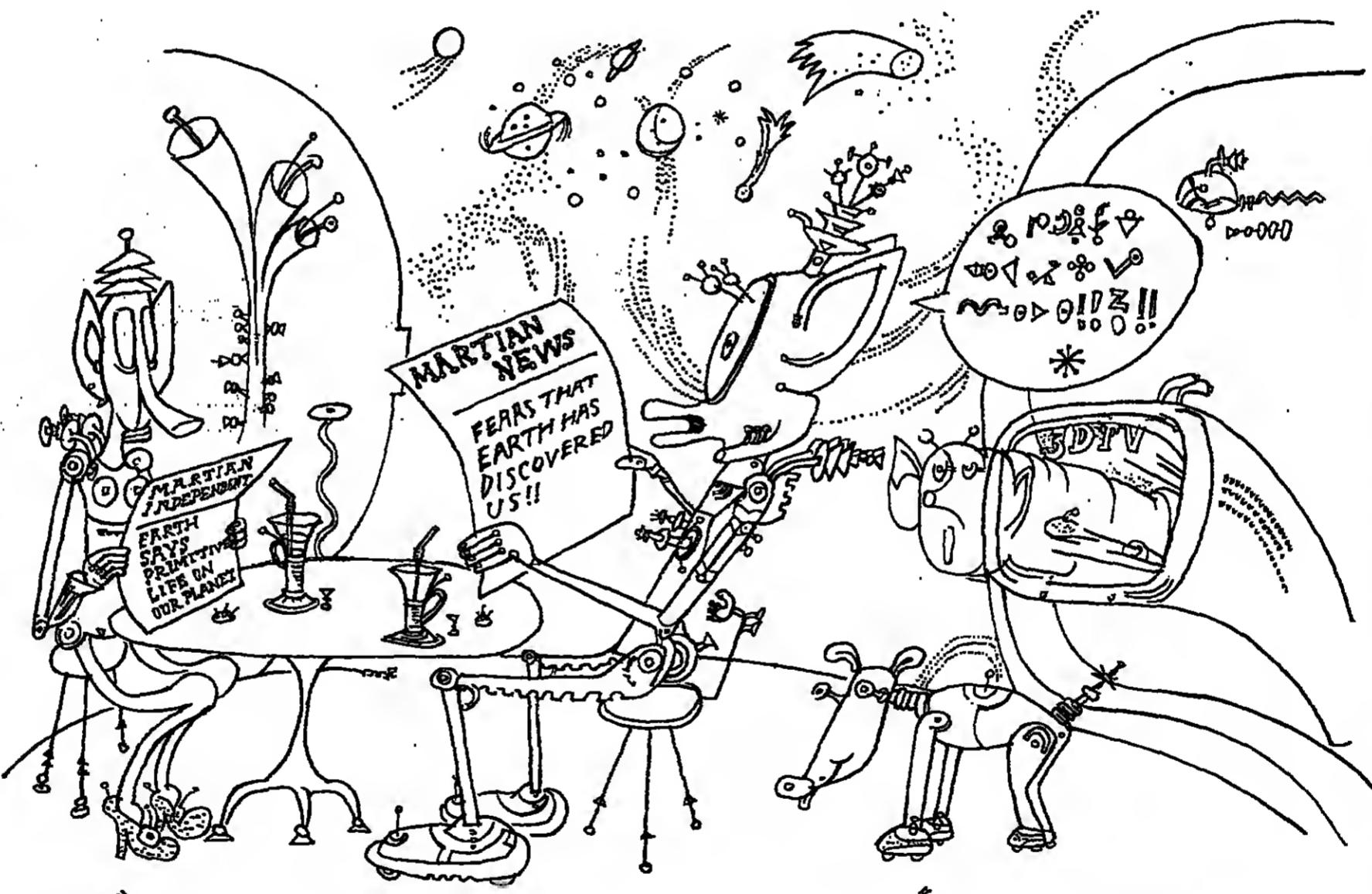
The American way is for those with talent and/or the will and determination to succeed through their own efforts to prevail, preferably overcoming massive obstacles along the way.

Consider, for example, arguably the biggest winner at Atlanta, sprinter Michael Johnson. During the early part of his career he was ignored and ridiculed by the athletics fraternity for his awkward style which was pronounced "wrong". Now, as a world record holder and Olympic champion in two major track events, his place in American sporting and cultural folklore is assured.

It is interesting, but ultimately pointless, to compare the medal achievements of the European Union and the European continent.

As Mr Hodgson obliquely concedes Europe is not unified; it is not one country.

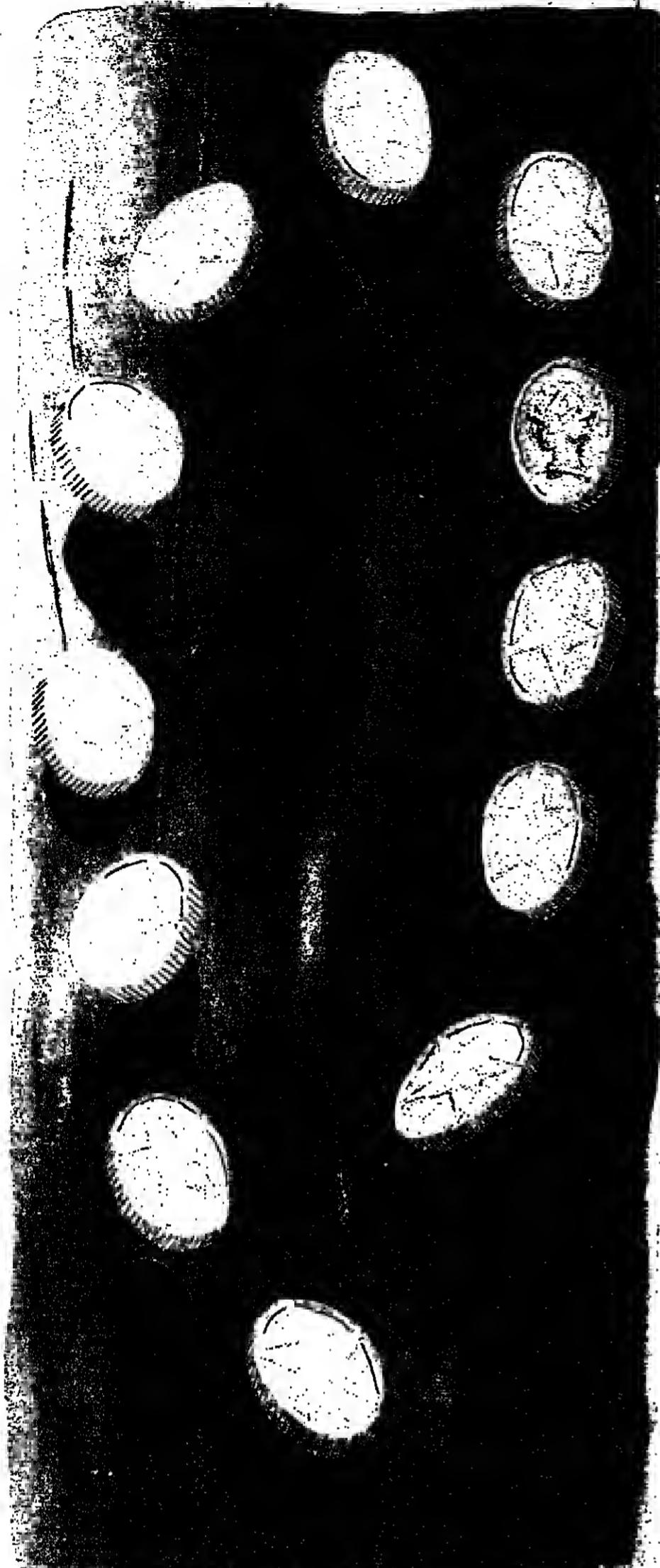
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analysis

CHRIS PRIESTLEY



Time's up: we must decide on the euro

Donald Macintyre (left) examines the disarray in Britain's political parties as the single currency looms, while Tony Barber reports on continental enthusiasm

Michael Portillo's remarks on the single currency last weekend were a triumph of coded delivery. The most forensic examination of the text reveals not a word out of place, not a hint of deviation from current Cabinet orthodoxy. Yet it formed an important message to dissidents rallying for the fast big internal struggle within Tory ranks before the general election. So sensitised is his party to every ounce of saying that Britain would have to decide "quite soon" on the single currency, the Defence Secretary was able to reassure the Euro-sceptic right that their Cabinet champions are preparing once again for battle. The formulation was calculated to draw attention to the importance of that momentous decision.

Few Tories now talk of persuading John Major to rule out British membership of EMU for the duration of the next Parliament. Instead, the new fashion on the right is to press for a "compromise" under which the Prime Minister would rule out, in advance of the election, the prospect of joining it by the starting date of 1 January 1999. Such a formula, its Euro-sceptic protagonists argue, would allow the party to show its true colours without losing the chance to join monetary union later if it proved to be a success.

Their case is seductive. Can Mr Major really go through an election saying he hasn't made his mind up on the most momentous decision a new government will have to take? After all, the EMU timetable will force whoever wins to make that decision within a few months of taking office.

Some on the right now recognise the catastrophic consequences of provoking the resignation of the pro-European Kenneth Clarke. Instead, they suggest that the Chancellor and his ally Michael Heseltine will be persuaded that, with the ratio of public debt to gross domestic product currently above 4 per cent, it will be impossible to bring it down by 1997 to the 3 per cent required by the Maastricht treaty as a precondition of EMU membership and that there is no harm in admitting as much before the election.

This way, Mr Clarke need not resign. After all, he has not frequently and publicly stressed the importance of sticking rigidly to those preconditions? Finally, isn't there still a danger that Tony Blair will play the populist trump card and rule out the prospect that a Labour government would be an EMU founder member?

Seductive, yes. Persuasive, no. Let's take Labour first. It is certainly possible, if not probable, that the more Euro-sceptic Robin Cook will seek to persuade Mr Blair and Gordon Brown that Labour would do well to rule out Britain's joining at the starting date. Neo-Keynesian to the last, he might seek to argue, for example, that the first Labour budget for 18 years should not be constrained by the need to keep borrowing down to EMU-acceptable

levels. The problem is that Mr Brown himself will be pulling Mr Blair the other way. If anything, Mr Brown is more likely to argue that the party should be more positive about EMU than it has been in its carefully central draft manifesto. In that way, if it decides to join, it could argue that the general election had given it a mandate and therefore would not have to put such a decision to a referendum. For all the signs are that Mr Brown, like Mr Clarke, is deadly serious about keeping open the possibility of joining EMU.

The backbench left-wing argument against EMU is different to that of Tony Euro-sceptics. It is about economic and not the issue of political sovereignty: you can't devalue or revalue at will if you are locked into a single currency. But either Mr Blair or Mr Brown is going to run that kind of economic policy, in or out of EMU.

Given that a British government outside EMU will have to pay a premium, for example in higher interest rates, as strong as tough a monetary regime as countries inside it, there remains a strong case for joining.

Labour's policy may well not change at all before the next election. But it is not likely to change in the direction the Tony Euro-sceptics would like.

Their wishful thinking about Mr Clarke isn't convincing either. He, of all people, is hardly going to offer himself up as the Chancellor who couldn't make Britain's economy qualify for the single currency. The current forecasts are that the ratio of debt to GDP will reach the required 3 per cent or close by 1997. And anyway, even the most literal interpretation of the Maastricht treaty leaves some leeway in the criteria for EMU.

His Tory opponents are dreaming of what they can rule out membership in 1999 without risking his resignation.

Mr Major, the party manager, will still be tempted. He should remember, however, that the Euro-sceptics have impaled themselves on their own success in persuading him to grant a referendum if a Tory government should decide to enter a single currency. The argument that Mr Major should rule out a single currency before the election was always going to have less moral force if the people would get their say in the end anyway. Which is why Mr Portillo – and John Redwood, until he left the Cabinet and changed his stance in the heat of the 1995 leadership election campaign – were against the referendum pledge in the first place.

To rule out a single currency in 1999 would still, in practice, if not in theory, rob the opt-out clause that Mr Major wove at Maastricht of its purpose. It would violate one of the first laws of politics, which is not to take a decision until you have to. It would leave his Euro-sceptics asking for more, without remotely serving the national interest. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that it would do for his foreign policy in 1996 or 1997 what Black Wednesday did for his economic policy in 1992.

As the deadline for launching the single currency, European Union governments resemble a pack of middle-distance runners shifting into sprint mode for the finish. However, the aim of the race is not exactly to come first, but to breast the tape inside an agreed qualifying time.

Of the 15 racers, only three seem virtually certain not to join monetary union from the outset. It is planned to start in January 1999, with the irrevocable fixing of exchange rates among participating countries. But Britain and Denmark have opted out of the euro, and Greece's economy is too weak to permit membership.

For most of the other 12 runners, the last lap is proving to be a rigorous exercise in financial self-discipline (some would say self-punishment) designed to ensure that they fulfil the Maastricht treaty's criteria for joining the single currency. Governments across Europe are preparing sharp cuts in their 1997 budgets so that their public sector deficits meet the Maastricht target of 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

If anyone in Britain doubts the political commitment of continental governments to monetary union, the scale of the austerity measures being introduced from Germany, France and Belgium to Italy, Spain and Portugal should dispel all illusions. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government aims to cut Germany's deficit by DMS50bn (£22bn) next year, or roughly 1 per cent of GDP.

In Spain, where an unemployment rate of 22 per cent suggests the need for an urgent programme of job creation, the government wants to cut the deficit from 5.8 per cent of GDP in 1995 to 4.4 per cent this year and reach the hallowed 3 per cent in 1997. Portugal's Socialist prime minister, Antonio Guterres, said: "It is vital for Portugal to be at the centre of the European integration process. We will have to be extremely tough in cutting expenditure."

Most governments are so determined to adopt the euro that they will risk social unrest

is slightly too high. As Luxembourg's Prime Minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, put it: "If Germany is 3.5 per cent and France is 3.7 per cent, it's OK. You're not going to miss an historic opportunity over 0.4 [sic] per cent of GDP."

This goes for the debt target, too. Monetary

union is almost inconceivable without Belgium, whose capital is the EU's heartland, so the Belgians will join even though their 1997 debt will be far above 60 per cent of GDP – 130 per cent, according to Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Maastricht allows such flexibility because the relevant clauses say that a country's deficit can exceed 3 per cent if it is "exceptional and temporary". Public debt can exceed 60 per cent provided that it is falling to that level "at a satisfactory pace". Ultimately, political judgement will prevail.

It nevertheless remains vital that EU governments avoid giving the impression to financial markets that wobbly economies may participate in monetary union, if the markets take fright, they could destroy the project by stampeding into the German mark and dumping weaker currencies – just as they wrecked the old Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992-93.

For this reason, it is improbable that all 12 countries will launch the euro in concert. Particular question marks hang over Italy, Spain and Portugal, yet this trio would bitterly resent the implication that they must languish in a southern second division while Germany and other rich northerners revel in a euro premier league.

In the countdown to 1999, perhaps the most important and unpredictable factor is the role of public opinion. People in most EU countries have only a hazy idea of how the euro might affect their lives (and the European Commission's decision not to run an information campaign in this country speaks volumes about its view on whether Britain will join).

In countries with high unemployment (most EU states), or sensitivities about sovereignty (France and Sweden), or great devotion to their national currency (Germany), opponents of the euro will seize every opportunity to swing public opinion in their direction. If the euro becomes associated in people's minds with austerity and stagnant growth, it may never get off the ground. However, no one in Britain should be complacent. The best guess now is that monetary union will happen, with Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as the likeliest members from the start. The governments of the other seven (with the telling exception of Britain's) would all like to be there eventually.

If Britain is to reject the euro for political reasons, it needs to wake up sharp and confront some important questions. Can we prosper on the outside? Will the City retain its financial pre-eminence? What will remain of Britain's influence in Europe and the world?

Ruling out EMU now violates the first law of politics: don't make a decision until you have to

are that the ratio of debt to GDP will

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should decide to enter a single cur-

rency.

To dwell on numbers, however, is to

miss the point. Monetary union is a

politically conceived project, designed

to set an eternal seal on European unity,

and its supporters will not be deterred

by "trivia" such as a budget deficit that

Life on Mars – but not as we know it

ALH 84001 to Mars. Siteport number 153. Greetings, Commander.

I think we may have been rumbled. You remember that relatively complex organism that I mentioned in the appendix to my last report only 10,000 Earth cycles ago? Well it's come on a bit since then and, to be frank, has made my predictions about how the mammoth and giant sloth would between them inherit the Earth, look slightly off.

I regret this, as you can imagine, since I and the rest of the crew had put in a great deal of time and effort trying to establish friendly relations with creatures that are now – to be honest – extinct. We abducted them, probed them, planted subliminal messages in their minds, and were getting on fabulously. Another million cycles and we could have been organising mixed marriages. Mammoth would have wedded tusk in cilia with Martian. All to no avail: a couple of degrees of warming, a tiny retreat of the polar

icecaps, and all that's left is a pile of bones and tusks. It makes you want to spit.

So what about this new phenomenon? What's it like, and what does it know? First the good news. It thinks that the probe is a meteorite, accidentally dislodged from the surface of our planet by an asteroid, and that the crew are fossils. Some of the younger members are a bit marked by this, but most of us can see the funny side.

The other great error made by this being is its belief that we are, and I quote, "primitive single-cell organisms, not unlike bacteria or viruses". As if there were some great virtue in being ungainly and over-engineered! Which is paradoxical since this animal spends much of its time trying to make things smaller and less complicated – mini-thin and space-saving that ("the new chip that fits more information than ever before") – but cannot see the terrific advantages to being monocellular oozies!

The next question, I suppose, is whether we should now shift our focus to this organism, make friends with it, and cultivate it – or stick to helping our single-cell relatives down here to enjoy a better life. There are some viruses and bacteria on Earth – good fellows, if a little naive

– who could do with our help. And as the mammoth, Neanderthal and dinosaur experiences suggest, our track record in picking winners on this planet is not exactly impressive. I sometimes wonder whether we're not bad luck.

Prudentially I have been in touch recently with a number of bacilli, and have tried to use them to make initial contact, but with very poor results. One episode in a place called Egypt, 3,000 cycles ago, simply led to the extinction of all first-born and the incorporation of the incident in some strange religion. A second try got called "the Black Death", suggesting a lack of enthusiasm for the process. I have to confess that Ebola wasn't much more welcome. You sometimes feel like yelling out loud, "What's your problem? We're just trying to be friendly!" But being monocellular hasn't left room for much of a voice.

An amusing aspect of an otherwise dismal picture is the amount of effort expended by the animal on

entirely fictional meetings with beings from other planets: beings who always seem to bear an uncanny physical relationship to an organism which must surely be one of the most bizarre and unlikely in the universe. I've been contemplating getting the crew together in the shape of a humanoid, abducting some porky housewife from Birmingham, levitating her, giving her a good seating to, and then setting her free to tell the tale; but the Alpha Centauri bairn's got the copyright on that one, blast them.

I am sorry that this communiqué should be so vague. Still, it was great to hear about the successes of the missions to Uranus and Neptune. Personally, I always thought that we were more likely to find really intelligent life there – they're so much quieter.

Please give my love to my husbands, and tell them that I look forward to returning home, and spending a vacation on a luxury blob of carbonate, just floating down a canal.

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David Aaronovitch

of life on our planet (I know, give our billioo-cycle seniority, the irony sometimes gets me too), they think that (a) we're out to muck and (b) we're dead. It protects us for the time being, but is a little dispiriting. By the way, we are officially "hyperthermophiles". I must admit, I'd always had my doubts about you! (Only joking.)

The next question, I suppose, is whether we should now shift our focus to this organism, make friends with it, and cultivate it – or stick to helping our single-cell relatives down here to enjoy a better life. There are some viruses and bacteria on Earth – good fellows, if a little naive

the commentators



In search of Justice: the Erich Priebke case has descended into farce and raised more questions than it answered. Photograph: Vincenzo Pinto/Reuters

Why Italy cannot bring war criminals to justice

Whatever one thinks of the Rome military court's decision not to punish Erich Priebke, the former SS captain who took part in the massacre of 335 Italian civilians at the Ardeatine Caves in 1944, one thing is clear: his case will go down in history as an object lesson in how not to conduct a war crimes trial. An affair that was intended to bring a little historical justice to the single most brutal incident of the Second World War in Italy has turned, instead, into an undignified farce, opening up painful old wounds while raising far more questions than it has answered.

The trial, which took more than half a century to come to court in the first place, was characterised all along by obfuscation and mystery. One witness threw himself out of a window on the morning he was due to testify, another was unexpectedly disqualified by the judge and others still were prevented from answering certain key questions. The prosecution accused the court of protecting certain vested interests, claimed that the verdict had been decided in advance and tried – unsuccessfully – to have the case retried with a different set of judges.

Last Thursday, the court appeared to confirm the prosecution's worst fears by finding Priebke guilty but ruling that his crimes were covered by the statute of limitations because of "mitigating circumstances": that is, the fact that he was acting under orders from his Nazi superiors. So outraged was the reaction to this ruling, both in the corridors of power and out

on the streets, that Italy's politicians scrambled furiously to counteract it. After several hours of frantic phone calls and careful consultation of the criminal law, the Justice Minister, Giovanni Maria Flick, ordered Priebke's release, saying he was to be held in custody pending receipt of an extradition request from Germany. Now, Priebke is being interrogated all over again as he languishes in Rome's Regina Coeli

fourth, that after campaigning ardently for Priebke's extradition from Argentina two years ago, the Italian government should now consider handing him over to another country in the hope of securing the conviction it could not clinch at home.

The heart of the matter is that Italy, both judicially and psychologically, is quite unequipped to deal with war crimes; if the Priebke case has bred only confusion and consternation, it is partly because the Italians have yet to come to terms with the complex horrors of the 1930s and Forties for themselves. Since the war, there has been little or no soul-searching about the complicity of ordinary Italians in the crimes of the Fascist state, the Salo Republic, and as many as

15,000 people were slaughtered in reprisals and vendettas.

There were other dangerous cracks in the fabric of the nation, too: splits between republicans and monarchists, between the relatively prosperous north and the backward south, and with the Cold War creeping up, between Communists and anti-Communists. Under the circumstances, the country could ill afford a protracted period of reconciliation and self-criticism, so it passed an amnesty law exonerating all but the most heinous of crimes. There was

no purge of Fascist officials, not even in the police or the judiciary, with the result that many cases that might have come to court were quickly buried.

The only crime to be dealt with in the immediate post-war period was the massacre at the Ardeatine Caves, which was just too big an event to ignore. But even this first trial was a farce, since only Priebke's superior, the Gestapo chief Herbert Kappler, was given a jail sentence while five others were acquitted – again on the grounds that they were obeying orders. Priebke, who was on the run by then, his role was well known, was not even mentioned in the court documents.

It now appears hundreds of war crimes, even the ones committed by Germans, were systematically ignored by military prosecutors in the Fifties and Sixties. One of the SS members to feature prominently in the latest trial, Karl Hass, was allowed to live quietly in the Milan suburbs for years; to keep Nazis off his trail he was even officially registered as dead.

It seems unlikely that the Italians will ever embark on a thorough examination of the sins of the past – especially now that the National Alliance, heirs to the post-war neofascist movement, have re-entered the political mainstream. The prevailing talk is of reconciliation and consensus, not of stirring up old demons.

But the absurdity of Priebke affair, and the outrage it has provoked, may still achieve one thing: to make Italians realise what a mess they have caused by failing to deal with some of the basic issues of war crimes and their consequences a long, long time ago.

There has been no thorough investigation into Nazi collaborators

jail, the very place from which he plucked scores of the victims of the Ardeatine Caves massacre more than 52 years ago.

The absurdities of the situation are glaring. First, that the court should go against a precedent stretching all the way back to Nuremberg and look kindly on the excuse of obeying orders. Second, that the Italian government should interfere so blatantly with the workings of a supposedly independent judiciary once the verdict had been reached. Third, that Priebke should be acquitted but still find himself in jail. And

Italians may now realise what a mess they have caused

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WEEK 1 DAY 4
Freud
VISITING LECTURER: David Bodanis

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It's like to think of Freud as a Victorian explorer, gliding in his hot-air balloon over dense jungle at night. Strange tribes are busy down there; strange rituals are taking place around the scattered fires, which no one else had ever thought existed. He alone has been brave enough to fly here, and now he peers down, restraining his excitement, notepad at the ready to record the distant cries. He can dimly make out the tracks and villages through the gloom.

To Freud this jungle is the strange world of our unconscious and the way in – those first scattered fires he glimpsed – it through our dreams. This is why he asked his patients, stretched out on the stacked cushions of his couch, to relax, not to be embarrassed, and to call up the memories of their latest dream.

It was appalling stuff. There were fine, upstanding citizens of Vienna walking around who had had visions of murder or desperate lust in their minds just hours before. It was hard to work out at first, for even in the quiet of his study, his patients' conscious minds, agast at what was being revealed, would try to hold back the worst evidence.

In one dream, an English-speaker reported that the bot-



grabbed at her, pressing his "erect member" against her until she had receded in disgust. Well, Freud said calmly, her disgust was clearly displaced love. For shouldn't a normal woman be pleased by such a contact? After all, he personally knew Herr K, who was a handsome man. Dora had just displaced her desire upward, to her throat, which is why she had the cough.

Dora broke off the sessions, but Freud wasn't bothered. "The 'No' one hears from a patient with a repressed thought," he wrote, "only registers the repression. If one... disregards it, and continues the work, proofs will soon appear that 'No' in such a case signifies the desired 'Yes'."

The problem arises whenever one authority has insight into the truth, which others, mere mortals, are blocked from because of their delusions. Even with the best will a psychotherapist often ends up working blind – the piercing searchlight reveals no more than the operator's trembling hands – which has led to a sometimes embarrassing low cure rate.

This flaw didn't matter in 1920s America, where psychoanalysis first took off. It was simply taken as giving a justification to having fun, since you can never tell what damage you might do by hold-

ing your inner passion back. Radicals in numerous countries used it to undercut authority, for who would believe the pronouncements of an emperor or king who was subject to these unspeakable passions?

Disillusioned radicals could use it, too. Arthur Miller bitterly remembers his activist colleagues slipping, one by one, into the indulgence of long private analysis in the 1950s, and giving up on the world around them.

What remains of Freud's ideas? There's the original viewing of the night-revealed depths; the truth-tellings that force themselves out even in daytime slips of the tongue; the whole vision of our shaped-by-childhood traumas, or deep, hidden desires.

For the fact that you can't tell for sure which interpretation of them is right doesn't mean that no interpretation is true; that the unconscious is not, really, constantly trying to fight its way out. That's the final twist, the ultimate, obscuring tree cover over Freud's new continent. We can peer down all we want, but because of those inherent distortions, we'll never know, for sure, the meaning of what we've seen.

Tomorrow,
Quantum Mechanics

I think it was the sight of the scarlet-robed Hussar in full 19th-century fig and Lord Kitchener-clown moustachio, as he advanced up the stairs towards me, that suggested it might be time to go home. I had taken the Slo-Mo Spaceman in my stride; I'd got used to the Whirling Roadie; even the memory of the Mumified Martian had started to fade after midnight. But the arrival of the gay Hussar – that was seriously weird.

It was the night of *Independence Day*. Although my life is, of course, a whirling charivari of madcap public events, an invitation to the European premiere of America's top summer movie is still pretty hard to ignore. Leicester Square was crammed, my dear, with aspirant star-shaggers straining behind barricades for a glimpse of celebrity flesh. I have the true cineaste's contempt for that sort of carry-on, so, wearing the simple homespun garb of the ordinary filmgoer – bolo tie, wraparound mirror Ray-Bans, David Bowie stiletto heels and the word "Slave" carved on my cheek – I slipped

tered a tray of Moscow Mules (which amounted to the same thing).

The Gallery is part of the Science Museum and there was something inescapably decadent about munching your hamburger among the ancient exhibits of quartz and silica. But then elemental rockery and dressy sophistication were the order of the night. Silica deposits enhanced the silhouettes of several women in black décolleté. Two sweet-faced old ladies sat gossiping, oblivious to the fact that they were backgrounded by anthracite fossils. In the Igneous Rock room, a lanky Spinal Tap victim in crushed blue velvet and rectangular shades dashed hither and thither as if looking for a friend; it soon became clear he was trying to move in on Mick Hucknall once the latter had stopped chatting with Ruud Gullit, the dreadlocked footie star (what were they talking about? Conditioners?).

That was before I took my children kite-flying on Saturday. Hearing there were some kite displays at a nearby airfield in the Wolds of Hampshire, I drove over with my old-fashioned, rhomboid-shaped kite with its ribbon-bow tail – and stumbled onto a whole new civilisation. Everywhere,

blown to hell by the elements – like the American surfing fraternity, but without the elegance. It couldn't happen here, you think, because a) the closest thing in Britain to these weather conditions are the tournaments Rossini at Le Gavroche and b) British people have a more supine attitude to Mother Nature. You may get the occasional idiot fringe of hangover jumpers and windsurfers jumping out of cranes on Battersea Bridge or slaloming around the sewage in Chichester Harbour; but the majority of us still prefer a little light sunbathing to chasing torrential rainstorms and the like.

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quietly into the Odeon Cinema.

From my glamorous vantage point in the Upper Circle (the far corner of Row N, up there with the permafrost and the projectionist's discarded sandwich) I watched the celebs come and go. Vanessa Feltz appeared wearing a charming bedsheet festooned with seed pearls. Mick Hucknall, the mellifluous singer with the Simply Red barbershop combo, squired a young woman, the tops of whose stay-up stockings were perilously on display. One of the boys from *Men Behaving Badly* amusingly dropped his ice-cream on his shoe. Ah, the glamour of renown...

The film was complete bliss, in its brainless and derivative way, contriving to echo, at various points, *Alien*, *Star Wars*, *Closer Encounters*, *The American President*, *Top Gun*, *True Grid*, *48 Hours*, even a bizarre 20-second nod to *Showgirls*.

The best non-special-effects hit was when the action switched between a dozen combat units around the world, all of which were getting orders for the final shoot-out, and discovered a trio of Brit officers in (I think) the Iraqi desert, saying "About bloody time, too" in wizard-prang tones, at which the audience cheered lustily.

It seems unlikely that the British will ever embark on a thorough examination of the sins of the past – especially now that the National Alliance, heirs to the post-war neofascist movement, have re-entered the political mainstream. The prevailing talk is of reconciliation and consensus, not of stirring up old demons.

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John Walsh
Mick Hucknall was having a chat with Ruud Gullit. (What about? Conditioners?)

Jeff Goldblum tussling his independence

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Afterwards we milled about in front of TV lights and sound booms like fluffy cats cruelly impaled, then everyone roared off in coaches for the Earth Gallery in Kensington. There, once you'd gone past the bouncers, a revolting, mummified alien in a glass case with Prince Charles ears but no nose or mouth, and a Michelangelo-sized spaceman who bobbed slowly through the crowd, miming weightlessness, the design highlight was a glowing planet suspended at the top of an escalator. At the top, you did not, however, encounter a new plane of being; you encoun-



Hello Sydney: our new Olympic hope

vast, alien-invasion Uber-kites strained against the wind while their owners careered across the greenward at 50 mph in lethally dangerous three-wheel buggies. Modern kites whiz about the place like webbed boomerangs, threatening to slice your head open. Some of them are so complicated they require the use of three hands. And then you discover there's a small village of inventors, designers, maintenance men, cheerleaders and dreadlocked visionaries keen to explain to you about "ballet and precision" or "the Zen of kiteflying". But one important thing came out of it. Did you know that, at the International Kite Festival in Japan last weekend, the UK came first, second and third in formation flying? Forget beach volleyball. Hello synchronised kiteing. We must lobby the International Olympics Committee without delay.

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Economic View: The value of housework	19
Investment: Cash-pile boosts GKN	16
Market Report: Reed triggers takeover talk	18

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Economy: Businesses divided over need for increase but majority urge Clarke to ignore 'hawks'

Bank warns of inflation risk unless rates rise

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Inflation will be above the Chancellor's target and rising by mid-1998 unless interest rates are raised, the Bank of England's Inflation Report warned yesterday.

June's quarter-point reduction in the level of base rates had worsened the inflation outlook and to have a better-than-even chance of hitting the 2.5 per cent inflation target, Chancellor Kenneth Clarke would have to increase interest rates "at some point," the report added.

Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist, said: "Since May there has been a good deal of evidence to suggest we can have greater confidence in the view that demand is accelerating."

According to the Bank's new forecast there is a 30 per cent chance that inflation will exceed 4 per cent by mid-1998 if interest rates are not increased in the meantime.

Mr King defended the Bank against the Chancellor's recent charge that it has a record of being unduly pessimistic about inflation prospects. It had been no worse on average than the Treasury, he said, and its inflation forecast had always been in the lowest quartile of the range.

The Bank's warning yesterday followed a recent caution from the International Monetary Fund that there was no additional scope for British interest rates to fall.

Reactions to the Bank's hawkish line were mixed. Roger Bootle, the chief economist at City investment bank HSBC Markets known for his view that

inflation is dead, said: "This is the usual dose of Bank of England pessimism. I think the Chancellor will ignore them."

Businesses were unenthusiastic. Kate Barker, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry and one of the Treasury's "wise persons," said: "There is still a lot of uncertainty about the pace of recovery. There should be no change in interest rate policy for the time being."

The British Chambers of

Commerce said there was no need to increase rates though businesses would not want to see an interest rate cut that only had to be reversed.

Nationwide Building Society said it would have "some concerns" about the effect of a rise in housing market confidence. A spokesman for Abbey National, the country's second-biggest mortgage lender, said:

"For the time being it would be good to see things on an even keel."

However, Martin Weale,

head of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and a Treasury adviser,

said: "The Treasury is predicting bumper growth. The last base rate cut was a mistake and the sooner it goes up again the better."

Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown claimed the Bank's report confirmed that weak investment threatened to derail the recovery. "The foundations of the British economy are not strong enough for sustained growth and rising prosperity," he said.

Many City economists also agreed with the Bank's analysis. Ciaran Barr at investment bank Deutsche Morgan Grenfell said: "It is only Ken Clarke who thinks that inflation will carry on falling right through 1997 and beyond. The Bank is taking a big gamble, but we think they are right."

David Mackie, an economist at JP Morgan said many people were underestimating the likely scale of the recovery. If only half the £1.6bn in consumer windfalls due next year is spent, consumer spending would grow by well over 4 per cent. "The Governor should be banging the table after a couple of quarters like that," Mr Mackie said.

Yesterday's report said the inflation rate would fall below the Government's 2.5 per cent target in the short term. The accelerating pace of growth meant that two years ahead the target measure was more likely to be above 2.5 per cent and rising.

Mr King said uncertainty about the prospects for a recovery had receded since the Bank's last report in May. In particular, evidence and reports from the Bank's regional agents confirmed the view that demand was accelerating.

The Bank expects both con-

sumer spending and invest-

ment to pick up in the year ahead. Faster growth was signalled by the rapid increase in both personal and corporate holdings of broad money.

Mr King said there was no solid evidence the economy's trend rate of growth had increased enough for the Bank to take a more relaxed view about potential inflationary pressures.

Guardian angel: Eddie George (left) and Kenneth Clarke are likely to be at odds again

Irish building society buys Mortgage Corp

NIC CICUTTI

First National, the largest building society in Ireland, yesterday announced that it has paid £53m to buy The Mortgage Corporation, the UK centralised mortgage lender founded by Salomon Brothers, the giant US investment bank.

The society's purchase brings to a close Salomon Brothers' troubled and embarrassing mortgage-lending experience in the UK. In recent years The Mortgage Corporation (TMC) repeatedly came under attack from consumer groups for its high interest rates and allegedly aggressive stance towards its own borrowers.

Chris Heard, chief executive of First National's existing UK mortgage arm, Mortgage Trust, said his company's policy towards TMC's 30,000 borrowers, who owe a total of £1.2bn in home loans, would be noticeably different. "Things at TMC will improve further," he said.

TMC, set up by Salomon in 1986, was one of a new breed of highly competitive centralised lenders which grabbed market-share from building societies by launching innovative products and operating looser lending criteria. Centralised lenders mostly hit the buffers in the late 1980s, through the collapse in the housing market, unemployment, high interest rates

and repossession. TMC gained notoriety for its unwillingness to reduce its interest rates to borrowers at the same speed as other lenders. Consumer groups and trading standards officials were also inundated by complaints from borrowers complaining of threatened evictions.

Last year, the Office of Fair Trading, which regulates the loans market, threatened to strip TMC of its consumer credit licence, but backed away after the firm convinced the regulator it was reforming.

First National, whose acquisition of TMC means its mortgage assets now total almost £4bn, the equivalent of the UK's 11th largest building society, said it was highly pleased with its purchase. The society's managing director, John Smyth, said: "Having established a presence in Britain with the acquisition of Mortgage Trust, we have been keen to expand the society's operations here. [It] adds scale to our operations and will both reduce our unit costs and provide significant earnings enhancement."

Mr Heard said one of the first steps would be to rationalise activities between his own operation in Surrey, and TMC's, which employs 200 staff in Woking. He said that First National's expanding savings arm in the UK might lead to staff being kept on in jobs.

Hostilities brought to an end at Eurotherm

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Hostilities were finally brought to an end yesterday in the personality clash that has split the board of electronic equipment maker Eurotherm throughout the summer.

Five weeks after chief executive Claes Hultman was forced out by non-executive directors he was officially returned to his post by supportive institutional investors, including the Prudential, MAM and Schroders.

Jack Leonard, chairman, paid the price for Mr Hultman's return by retiring seven months earlier than he had planned. He is to be replaced by Sir James Hanrahan, former head of Scottish Nuclear and currently chairman of Hickson International, the chemicals manufacturer.

There had been fears that bringing Mr Hultman back to the company would in effect present him with carte blanche to act as he wished. Sir James dismissed that possibility. "I believe Claes is a team player. He will act within strategic frameworks which have been agreed with the board. This is

failed bid to oust Mr Leonard. He is understood to have considered all possible solutions including overruling the wishes of the rebel shareholders to insist on Mr Hultman's resignation.

It is understood that Sir James insisted on a commitment to the company from Mr Hultman. Some observers had suggested that having transformed Eurotherm over the past five years, boosting profits from £7.2m to £54.1m over that period, he might be unlikely to remain long after the bruising encounters of the past few weeks.

He said yesterday: "I am very pleased that matters have

now been resolved and that I am to continue as chief executive. The company has enormous potential and I am committed to the growth of Eurotherm in the long term. I look forward to working with Sir James."

Sir James's apparently firm and independent hand soothed concerns in the City and the shares closed 15p higher at 550p. They had traded as high as 64p in May but tumbled to 515p after Mr Hultman's unexpected resignation on 4 July.

An institutional investor in-

volved in the talks denied yesterday that a small handful of powerful funds had effectively dictated the return of Mr Hultman.

He claimed that representatives of funds holding more than 50 per cent of the shares had been present at the protracted negotiations in reinstating the chief executive and said the whole affair could very easily have been avoided if all the parties involved had discussed the problems before it blew up into a full scale row.

Man Utd scores its own channel

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Granada, the ITV franchise holder for the north-west of England, and Nynex CableComms, the country's second-largest cable operator, are in advanced talks aimed at launching a television channel in Manchester next year, headlined by shows on the top football team, Manchester United.

The project, which is also likely to involve the *Manchester Evening News*, is the latest by a leading cable operator to develop a strong regional franchise and to tap into new sources of advertising revenue. Nynex is the local cable operator in the Manchester area.

The move could see the birth of US-style local television, bringing together broadcasters, local sports teams and large media companies to create



Eric Cantona: game for a showbiz kick-off on cable

huge cross-marketing opportunities within tight-knit local communities. The partnership would broadcast special programmes on Manchester United, arguably the country's most successful football team. Insiders said an "in the boot

room" feature, phone-in shows and other football programmes could trade on the huge following of players like Eric Cantona and Ryan Giggs.

Manchester United has been eager to maximise revenues from its stellar brand name, which has fuelled the company's rapid growth on the stock market. The core broadcast rights to matches of the Premier League are held by BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster, and the BBC. But a range of subsidiary rights, are retained by the club itself.

Other ITV companies are believed to be interested in the concept. United News & Media, which owns the Meridian and Anglia franchises, has looked at Southampton, while Carlton Communications, which yesterday launched a new food channel on cable, confirmed that it had been considering the City TV concept.

French awarded franchise to run South-east trains

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport correspondent

France's Compagnie Generale des Eaux has won the right to run a second rail franchise in the UK, giving it control over two-thirds of British Rail's former Southern Region.

The franchising director, Roger Salmon, announced yesterday that London and South Coast Railways, a subsidiary of Generale des Eaux, was the preferred bidder for South Eastern Trains, which mainly runs services to Kent and East Sussex from London's Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations. Last year it had passenger revenue of £205m, making it the fourth biggest of the 25 rail franchises.

If, as expected, the deal is confirmed within the next fortnight, it will give the French company control of virtually all services out of London Victoria, offering the opportunity for considerable savings as it also operates Network South Central, which runs trains to Sussex and Hampshire.

Last night, a spokesman for Generale des Eaux said the two franchises could not be merged into one, but there would be "obvious synergies" between the two businesses.

The allocation of the franchise means that a French-owned company will control the trains that go to Dover and Folkestone. Following the construction of the Channel tunnel all boat trains - apart from those to Ramsgate - have been

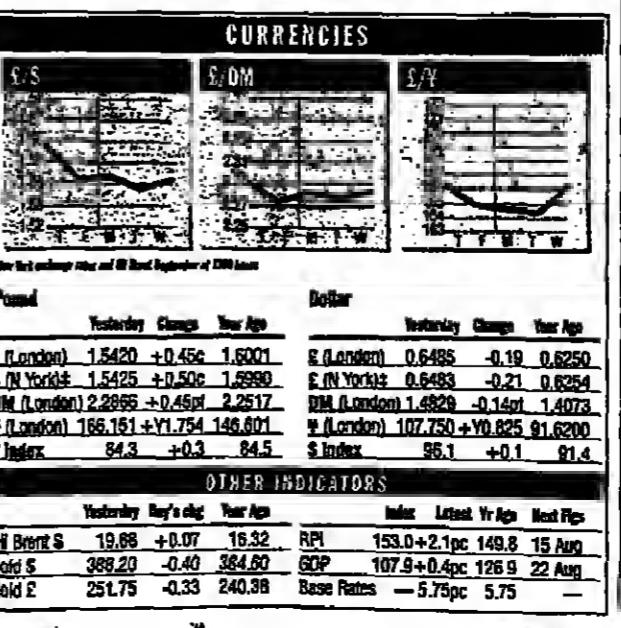
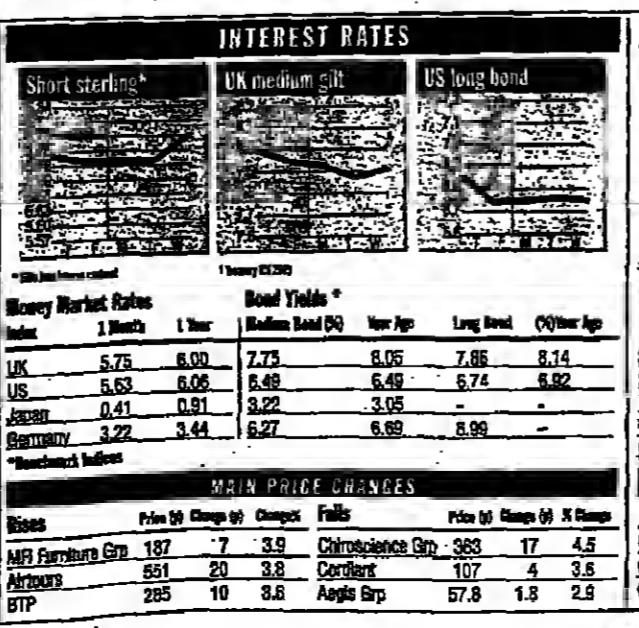
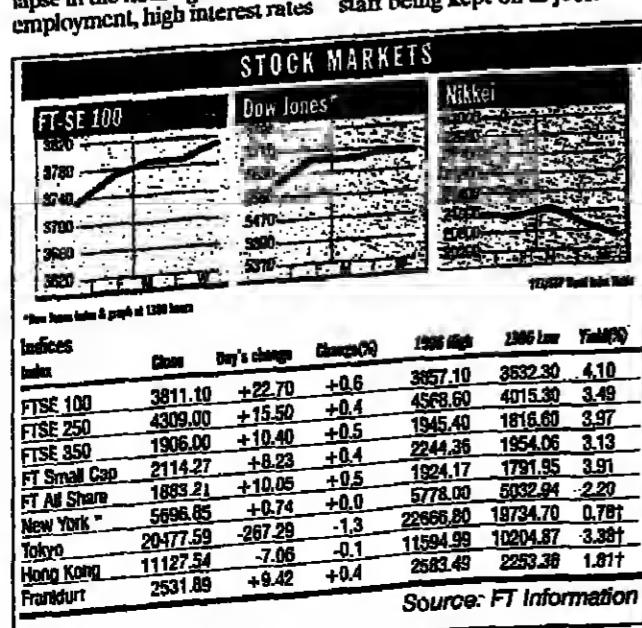
scrapped. The likeliest date for the new company to take over South Eastern is 15 September. The allocation is a blow to Stagecoach, which already runs South West Trains, the third part of the old Southern Region, and was on the short-list along with GBRail and a management buy-out team.

Mr Salmon has denied that the two-week delay in awarding the South Eastern franchise, was connected to last week's controversial takeover of Porterbrook rolling stock company for £25m by Stagecoach. However, rolling stock manufacturers will be relieved that Stagecoach, having promised to spend £90m on new rolling stock, will not have control of the order for 81 trains on South Eastern which, under the terms of the franchise must take be replaced within three years.

Stagecoach may find itself banned from further bids following its takeover of Porterbrook and it may even be tempted to sell South West Trains to Generale des Eaux, thus recreating the old Southern Region.

Generale des Eaux becomes the second company to run two franchises after National Express successfully bid for Gatwick Express and Midland Main Line, though it faces an investigation by the Office of Fair Trading over the latter.

Two other franchises have gone to management buy-out teams: with Sea Containers, Stagecoach, and Prism picking up the other franchises.



business

Abbey profits up as it ignores loan wars

NIC CICUTTI

Abbey National yesterday shrugged aside its inability to increase its tiny share of the new mortgage market in the past six months by announcing a 16 per cent rise in first-half pre-tax profits.

The bank said its 3 per cent new lending had been caused by its refusal to enter the mortgage price war by offering heavily discounted home loans.

It pointed to a substantial increase in new mortgage busi-

ness, up 8 per cent, by National & Provincial, the building society it has just taken over. The acquisition of N&P increased at a stroke the Abbey's share of the mortgage market from 12.1 to 15 per cent.

Lord Tugendhat, chairman at the Abbey, said of the bank's profits rise: "This has been achieved against a background of competitive mortgage and savings' markets. Our results therefore give us confidence that we are pursuing the right strategies. We aim to strengthen

Abbey National's market position in UK personal financial services by consolidating our standing in the mortgage and savings market.

"We will also continue to diversify profit streams away from traditional mortgage and savings activities, providing a broader range of products and services to customers."

Lord Tugendhat said one sign of this diversification was that Abbey National had boosted profits from outside its core savings and mortgage

areas from virtually nothing seven years ago to 42.5 per cent. This was ahead of the 1997 target of 40 per cent set in March last year, he added.

Abbey National Life, the bank's own life and pensions business, reported record profits, up 38 per cent, on the back of an 8 per cent increase in annualised premium income. This included half-year sales of £230m for Abbey's first PEP, launched last year.

Abbey's treasury operation contributed £129m to group

profits, an 18 per cent increase over the same period last year.

Consumer credit profits rose 153 per cent to £43m, boosted by the Abbey's acquisition of FNFC, a large credit provider.

However, Lord Tugendhat admitted Abbey had suffered a net outflow of savers' funds in the first half of 1996. "This is mainly to do with Tessa matures," he said. "Out of the £4bn mortgage book, some £3bn matured earlier this year. Despite our retention of two-thirds of this, many of our customers have chosen to spend the pro-

ceeds - fuelling the kind of sales we have seen recently."

Margaret Schwarz, the bank's chief economist, said the Abbey had been affected by its disproportionate 14 per cent market share in the Tessa market in 1991, which it did not expect to hold entirely at maturity earlier this year.

Abbey National's cost-to-income ratio dropped to 41.6 from 44.6 per cent at the same point last year. Lord Tugendhat said the bank aimed to bring the ratio below 40 per cent.

Standard slims down with workforce cuts

NIC CICUTTI

Standard Chartered, the international banking group, yesterday warned of heavy staff cuts among its 25,000-strong workforce in coming months, citing an "unacceptable" cost-to-income ratio as the deciding factor.

The bank's move came despite unveiling a 31 per cent increase in first-half trading profits to £402m, while pre-tax returns rose £129m to £448m.

Malcolm Williamson, chief executive at Standard Chartered, criticised the bank's 55 per cent cost-to-income ratio and said that it must be reduced to under 50 per cent in the short-term.

He said: "A medium-sized bank like Standard Chartered must be a low-cost operator to be nimble and flexible. [The bank] will have to re-engineer the business, introduce more automation and wean out businesses which are not producing satisfactory results."

However, he indicated that

any job cuts were less likely to occur in economically advanced countries, where there already have been staff reductions. In the past three years the bank has axed 16 per cent of its workforce, 3 per cent of which suffered the cuts in the past six months.

Standard's shares touched a high of 719p in early trading, but slipped back to close at 699p, down 13p on the day.

The bank's pre-tax returns were boosted by exceptional gains of £42m, much of which came from the sale of its private banking business to Swiss Bank Corporation.

Some 38 per cent of the bank's total trading profit came from Hong Kong, at present under British control but due to be handed back to China in 1997. "We are very happy about what we see out there. It is quite remarkable what's been achieved," Mr Williamson said.

He added: "I don't think growth rates in Hong Kong are going to be quite as high as



Photograph: Paul Bulley

people hoped but nevertheless they are very positive and they are higher than what we are seeing in the UK."

Standard Chartered would not follow other banks, such as

National Westminster and Barclays, which are conducting share buy-backs to return value to their shareholders, Mr Williamson said: "We are in very high-growth markets.

Balance sheet growth is significant and we need a solid base to generate growth."

He admitted, however, that the bank had so far spotted few acquisition opportunities, with Visa and Mastercard.

Bad weather losses blast Commercial Union results

NIC CICUTTI

Commercial Union, one of Britain's largest composite insurers, yesterday blamed heavy weather-related losses in the United States and Britain for a 15 per cent drop in pre-tax profits in the first half of this year.

Shares in the company closed 4p higher at 617p after analysts said that, despite the drop in profits, CU's results were at the top end of their forecasts.

CU said that in France profits from Abeille, its life and general insurance business bought in 1994, increased by £22m to offset the losses.

Shares in the company closed 4p higher at 617p after analysts said that, despite the drop in profits, CU's results were at the top end of their forecasts.

CU said that in France profits from Abeille, its life and general insurance business bought in 1994, increased by £22m to offset the losses.

John Carter, chief executive at CU, said: "These strengths have helped to reduce the effect of

increased weather claims and competitive general insurance markets in the UK."

General insurance rates in the UK remained competitive, but there were signs of selective increases in some areas, mostly in motor cover. CU made an underwriting loss in Britain of

£26m, down from a £36m profit at the same point last year.

The IRA bomb attacks in London in February and in Manchester in June cost CU £3m, Mr Carter added.

The insurer is hoping to cut costs by introducing new information technology.

Cash-pile boosts GKN's fortunes

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

the full year of at least £360m, the shares currently trade on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 16. Compared with a growth rate that has slowed markedly since 1994 and 1995, that is a full rating; the shares are high enough.

Bid possibilities offer TDG hope

So many companies piled into distribution in the 1990s that the sector is now looking horribly crowded and the pain is starting to show. Christian Salvesen has found the going tough, hence the £1bn takeover attempt by Hays, Tibbett & Britten and NFC have had their problems. And Transport Development Group has been a long-term struggle. Its figures yesterday made grim reading, though there are hints that the worst may be over.

One glimmer of hope for TDG's long-suffering shareholders is the possibility of take-over action. With margins hit by increasingly powerful customers such as the supermarket groups, size and volume is becoming more important. The

TDG hopes to play its part in that consolidation as a predator though it could easily end up as prey. Even if a bid fails to materialise there are some signs of trading improvement.

Profits in the six months to June were down almost 10 per cent to £15.7m with the consumer division, which services the retailers and food manufacturers, causing the most concern. Profits dipped sharply due to the loss of a confectionery contract which is being replaced with lower margin business.

There was better news elsewhere.

The hire division was flat, hit by increased competition and lower margins particularly in the plant hire market. However, in an industry that has seen profit warnings from both Hewden-Stuart and Vibroplant, a flat performance is creditable.

The industrial division increased profits and has won new business. With its customers not yet as crazy as the supermarkets in their logistics negotiations, margins are fatter here and improving.

TDG's shareholders have had a pretty rough ride in the last two years, with the shares sliding from a high of 326p in early 1994 to 205p yesterday, down 0.5p. Though management have done well to cut costs and sell off parts of what was a sprawling business, the City is waiting for signs of growth in the sales line. Full-year profits of £34.5m are forecast which puts the shares on a forward rating of 13. Worth holding.

Little wonder then that half-time figures showing a recovery from last year's calamitous second half should have put 6p on the share price to yesterday's close of 136p. After the catalogue of woes that Holliday shareholders have had to endure, even a slump in interim profits from £11m to £3.1m seemed harmless enough compared with the £1.1m earned in the final six months of 1995.

If Michael Peagram, Holliday's chairman, has learnt anything from the past few years it is not to disappoint the City which takes no hostages when its expectations are dashed. So his relatively downbeat statement, citing tentative business confidence and a continuing focus on Holliday's own performance, should be seen as an overly conservative assessment.

But the dyestuffs market remains tough with several large European players prepared to trade at a loss to grab market share. The inks market is also struggling thanks mainly to depressed conditions in France.

Even so, analysts were yesterday pushing up their forecasts to about 16.5m, ahead of the 15.4m achieved in 1995 but well short of the 19.3m reported in 1994. That figure is expected to be exceeded next year when profits could reach £20m.

If the 1997 target is reached, the shares will trade on a prospective p/e ratio of 10. Not a demanding rating, but it would be wrong to expect much more given the bridge-building with investors still required. A dividend yield of 4.9 per cent provides some support.

Rawlins bullish about his return to the City

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILCOCK

Peter Rawlins is back. For those who don't remember, he was the chief executive of the London Stock Exchange who was forced to resign three years ago when the Taurus automated share settle system was scrapped at a cost to the City of £400m.

But enough of that. Many thought him a scapegoat for an Exchange-wide failure. As Mr Rawlins says: "I'm history and it's history to me."

Now Mr Rawlins is returning from the US to become European head of Siegel & Gale, the corporate identity arm of Coriant. Any lasting resentment City people feel may have been mitigated in the intervening years by the unpopular reign of his successor, Michael Lawrence, who was himself sacked last year.

Mr Rawlins will be overseeing Siegel & Gale's business in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The company specialises in rethinking how companies present themselves to the public – the "voice concept" – and is expanding into interactive and digital media.

So does Mr Rawlins have any regrets about the Exchange? "None at all. I'm very proud of what I did there." Spoken like a man. And who knows. The Exchange could do with an image makeover...

David Atkinson, head of research at NatWest Markets, has issued an edict banning his analysts from talking to the wire services.

Glenda Jackson, shadow transport spokesperson and Oscar-winning actress, has been busy lambasting companies such as Hanson Trust which have benefited from rail privatisation at the same time making handsome donations to the Tory Party. Hanson, a partner in the group that bought Eversholt Leasing Company, gave £100,000 in 1995/6. Ms Jackson says: "It's crystal clear why John Major is so reluctant to condemn the fat cats – the fattest cats of all are sitting in Conservative Central Office."

Can this really be the same Glenda Jackson who starred in a TV commercial for Hanson with American actor George Segal?

"The company over here that's doing rather well over there." The image would not be unadjacent to what Hanson paid the Tories. Sounds like the cat is biting the hand that feeds it.

Mr Atkinson was a food manufacturing analyst himself until three months ago, and thinks analysts waste valuable time talking to wire journalists.

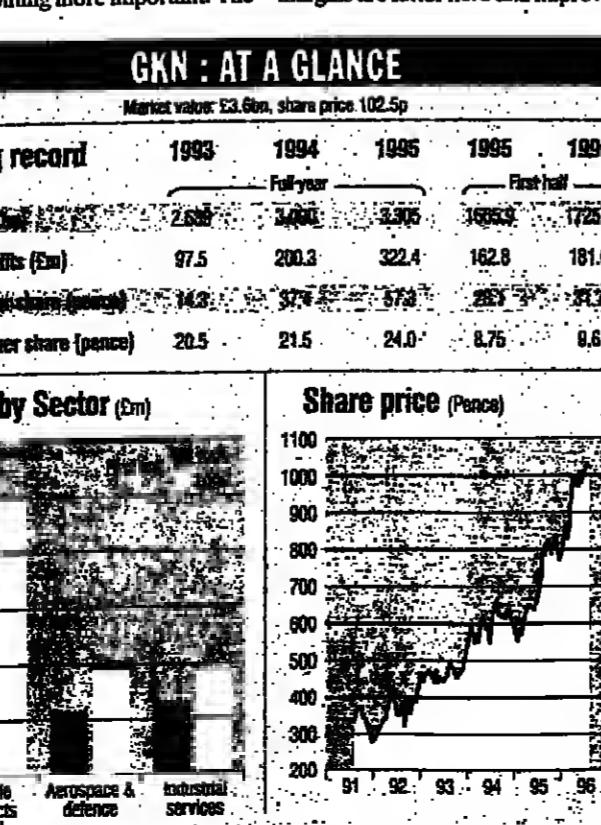
"When the analysts are trying to tell their clients whether to buy or sell, they keep getting phoned up by Reuters and Bloomberg asking 'Why did this stock go up? Why did that one go down?'"

"More worrying, there have been one or two instances where our clients have seen our own recommendations on the wire services before we had a chance to talk to them [the clients], which looks a bit stupid," adds Mr Atkinson.

Print journalists such as myself may still ring up, he says, since papers appear the day after their move to the Square Mile.

"I've been very struck by the amount of talent in the City, which is abundant and impressive. There is also a lot of informality and friendliness, which counts pretty highly." Very diplomatic.

Dame Pauline's contacts with overseas governments have already paid off. "It helped us win the mandate from the Yugoslav government. NatWest Markets is advising them on rescheduling their debt and privatisations."



With analysts forecasting profits for

Schering blames poor drug sales on cost cutbacks

PATRICK TOOHER

country," she said. "Treatment for this disease should not depend on where you live."

Betaferon, which had sales of DM265m (£116m) in the first half of the year, was introduced into Europe last year after being previously available only in the US. It was hailed by some doctors as the biggest breakthrough in tackling multiple sclerosis in 20 years after the drug was shown to cut the frequency of relapses in MS sufferers by up to a third, though it does not halt the degenerative disease.

Betaferon is Schering's strongest-selling product and significantly contributed to the group's 32 per cent rise in interim net profits of DM 244m on sales 11 per cent higher at DM2.6bn.

But ongoing problems in the UK forced Schering to revise this year's sales forecasts for the drug to DM 535m from an earlier target of DM600m.

Schering, which has been plagued by rumours of production problems with its high-profile drug, said it had no supply problems and had yet to feel the pinch from rival products.

Analysts say some MS patients have adopted a wait-and-see approach until more efficacious products are available. "Patients are not exactly beating down their doctors' door to be prescribed the drug," Ms Haylock said.

"This product should be available equitably across the

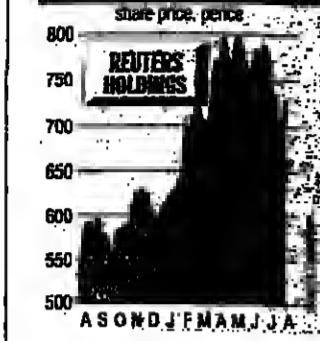
COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Abbey National (1)	(-)	550m (483m)	27.6p (24.7p)	8.7p (7.25p)
Airtours (23)	485m (432m)	19.7m (13.4m)</td		

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3811.1 +22.7
FT-SE 250
4309.0 +15.5
FT-SE 350
1906.0 +10.4
SEAQ VOLUME
808.9m shares,
32,737 bargains
Gifts Index
93.50 +0.11

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Reed plays key role as punters place bets on takeovers

Suddenly it was just like old times. In the most bid-happy day for months, tales of takeover action swirled, lifting blue chips and second-liners in often brisk trading.

Reed International, the Anglo-Dutch media group, was a key element in the speculative proceedings as stories allegedly filtered through from the Netherlands that it intended to swoop on Reuters, the information group.

Whether the stock market lost touch with reality remains to be seen. But the Reed story was eventually refined with Bloomberg, the privately owned information group, replacing Reuters.

It is widely believed Reed would like to absorb Bloomberg and may have sounded out its founder, Michael Bloomberg. If it did descend on the wire service it would offer the financial muscle for an aggressive challenge to

Reuters. Pearson, the banking and media group which produced better-than-expected figures on Monday, was also caught in the Reed net. Talk the Anglo-Dutch group would produce the bid the world and his dog have for long anticipated pushed the shares up 9p to 654p against 61p ahead of the results.

Reed is due to produce interim figures today. Up to £415m against £370m is expected. Its shares put on 21p to 1,150p while Reuters, where a £900m cash plus means share buy-back hopes are never far below the surface, added 22p to 729p.

Utilities were also drawn into the bid maelstrom. An electricity buy note from Morgan Stanley helped generate the excitement; the US investment house believes most of the remaining independents are worthy of attention. Northern, np 14p at 548p,

made its own contribution by announcing plans for a second special dividend.

East Midlands Electricity, up 14p at 597p, ignored reports that one of its proposed US bidders, Virginia Power, had been told by its state regulator to confine its activities to its own backyard. VP has set according to the rumour mill, been a leading contender for East Midland, with Florida Power and Houston Industries the main players.

There were also ripples on the water front with Severn Trent 16p higher at 597p and Wessex, on Southern Electricity bid hopes, 8p at 348p.

Imperial Chemical Indus-

tries was another drawn into the bid frame. The shares rose 10p to 796p as talk of a German strike mingled with share buy-back hopes.

Thorn EMI was given a spin, ahead of the merger. Seagram, the Canadian drinks giant with a growing thirst for showbiz, was said to be planning an asset sale to mount a bid for the music side.

A covered warrants issue on the rental and music constituents from Barclays de Zoete Wedd added to the excitement with the shares up 21p to 1,786p.

The speculative atmosphere helped the FTSE 100 index above 3,800 points for the first

time since early May. It closed 22.7 points higher at 3,811.1, its sixth consecutive gain.

Turnover was reported at a respectable 808.9 million shares with a 33.1 million trade in Freepages, the directory group, allegedly the largest single trade. Strangely keen activity, including four 9 million trades, in Kay's Food was blissfully ignored, casting further doubts on the reported daily volume figures. The 666.9 million trade in Just, which distorted Monday's volume, was an error, presumably the action of a spaghetti-fingered trader.

Tesco, meeting analysis and attracting profit upgrades, rose 5p to 296p and Argos, with results soon, gained 11p to 745p. Greig Middleton expects £25m, up from £21.8m.

Barclays' remarkable progress continued with a 22.5p gain to 900p and confident talk of £10 being reached. NatWest Securities moved

TAKING STOCK

Springwood, the old 10 Walker timber group now the vehicle for leisure entrepreneur Adam Page, continues to move off its 633p low, gaining a further 8p to 673p. The recovery has been helped by growing evidence of its leisure ambitions.

Today it opens a venue bar, with a 1,000-customer capacity, at Newcastle-under-Lyme and plans more such ventures as well as night club openings later this year. Mr Page established Midsummer as a leading leisure group before it was taken over after a furious and controversial battle.

Dolphin Packaging, a maker of those sandwich and hamburger packs, is at 171p, nudging its 12 month high. It is believed to be trading well but looks a prime takeover candidate with MY Holdings thought to be lurking.

Wh.

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

of the year

REUTERS HOLDINGS

AS ON 21 JUN 1996

High Low Price Chg Yld Precent

Alcoholic Beverages

ABV Area 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Adnams 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Amstel 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Anglo Irish 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Antique 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Ardbeg 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Barbary 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Bass 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Bell's 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Bentley 382.0 382.0 382.0 0.0 0.0%

Bell's 382.0 382

business

Why housework should be taken into the accounts

Which of these activities is more like hard work: having a chat over a coffee with a colleague at the office or vacuuming under the bed at home? Another question: which of these activities counts in GDP, the standard measure of the size of the economy? The answers are, respectively, the second and the first.

It is pretty widely accepted that the conventional national accounts are not a comprehensive measure of economic well-being. The greatest advances have been made in taking the environment into account, but the Office for National Statistics is also researching the creation of "household accounts" which will measure unpaid work done in the home and the community.

Until the Industrial Revolution took firm hold, when more and more people switched from home-based work to waged work in factories, censuses classified unpaid work by women in the home as a productive activity. It was not paid but it was still a job. By the end of the 19th century, though, housewives were classed as unproductive dependants. It was not until the politically correct started to speak of them as "homemakers" that the notion that unpaid household work is valuable was revived.

The fact that the ONS has started to draw up household accounts, nearly a century since housework was last seen as valuable, does not mean it has been stormed by dungaree-wearing feminists. An article in the current issue of its *Economic Trends* explains that proper measurement of time used outside the marketed activities that are included in GDP is essential for many areas of economic policy.



ECONOMIC VIEW
DIANE COYLE

Author Henry Neuburger writes: "How people spend their time is as good a measure of civilisation and social progress as any."

But the purpose of household accounts is more practical. It is impossible to assess the impact of tax and social security policies on decisions to enter the labour force, on childcare choices, or care for the elderly and disabled, without an estimate of the "productive potential" of households. And it is clearly large, as the drawing of women into

is not completely equivalent to time spent in unpaid work, but the income tax system entirely ignores the need for work in the home and whether it is paid for or unpaid.

It is a gap that is becoming more pressing as people switch to more flexible patterns of employment. If the increasing numbers of people working part-time or for short periods of time or telecommuting intersperse their formal work with household responsibilities, volunteering or leisure, the conventional

unpaid work is not, tilts parents' choices dramatically. Either the family gives up a big chunk of income but does not pay for childcare, or the carer goes "out to work" but spends much of the income on

spread of labour-saving equipment such as washing machines, and perhaps more arguably – in leisure-time with televisions and stereos.

Mr Neuburger argues that welfare is increasingly likely to be measured in terms of the quality of people's time. Time will also be the important resource constraint on increased production – as any harassed and over-worked professional will confirm.

In a knowledge-based economy the key resource is not the number of workers as such but their quality, the length of time they spend contributing their brain-power.

Curiously, the computer-based industrial revolution that is taking place now is thus reverting towards the unit of measurement that was commonplace before the first Industrial Revolution.

With household accounts making the amount of unpaid work in the home explicit it would be possible to design a tax system that would have both supported families better and made individual choices more palatable. The tax penalty on marriage for two-car couples would have been removed long before Nigel Lawson thought of it, and parents would not be penalised for taking paid jobs.

The *Economic Trends* article points out that the existing national accounts have ignored changes in the quality of working life. Researchers at the University of Essex have confirmed that between 1960 and the mid-1980s the big change in the average person's use of time has been a switch from blue-collar to white-collar, and presumably less unpleasant work. Similarly, there have been quality improvements in time spent on housework thanks to the

The official statisticians are at work developing 'satellite' household accounts

the paid labour force during the Second World War and packing them back home afterwards demonstrated. Mr Neuburger comments of household accounts: "It is difficult to see how economic policy makers have got by without them."

Consider income tax. Two-earner couples in the UK are taxed as two separate people, although taxed a little less if married. They pay more tax than a couple with only one earner. Fair enough – they have higher money incomes. On the other hand, they also either pay somebody else to do their work or their parents pay somebody else to do it.

The fact that paid work is considered real work and taxed while

boundary between production included in GDP and other activities will become both harder to measure and increasingly interesting.

The area where the shortcomings of the existing measurement of the economy has a huge impact on households is childcare and care for other dependants. The tax system takes almost no account of the number of dependants in the household and who does the work of looking after them. Children are either looked after by a parent or other family member staying at home or their parents pay somebody else to do so.

The fact that paid work is con-

sidered real work and taxed while

housework is not, tilts parents' choices dramatically. Either the family gives up a big chunk of income but does not pay for childcare, or the carer goes "out to work" but spends much of the income on



Undervalued: The tax system ignores the need for work in the home and whether it is paid or unpaid

Economic Trends, July 96, HMSO £2.12.

Time spent in paid employment

subtracted from spot rate

rate quoted low to high at a premium:

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.

For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 323 303.

Cost: 30p per minute (cheapest rate) 40p other times.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Spot 1 month 3 months

Dollar

D-Mark

Country Spot 1 month 3 months

UK 15.20 7.6 11.8

1000

Canada 2.156 1.13 50.37

13720

– 0.0252

France 2.2865 48.41 140.30

14289

29.24 84.81

Italy 7.008 122.12 365.84

73.66

217.207 3461

Japan 23.43 49.63 142.66

15155

44.51 123.35

ECU 1.265 7.50 225.16

73.75

45.44 135.93

Belgium 4.238 12.7 22.26

30588

5.22 10.07

Netherlands 1.265 5.57 10.26

57.25

1.22 2.25

Denmark 1.265 5.57 10.26

57.25

1.22 2.25

Norway 9.678 50.30 310.20

60484

42.17 43.02

Spain 5.438 21.31 89.98

73.26

29.27 64.72

Sweden 1.233 5.46 10.26

63.900

4.11 9.11

Switzerland 1.265 5.57 10.26

57.25

1.22 2.25

Australia 1.958 20.31 67.85

12677

19.21 54.56

Hong Kong 1.927 10.61 22.40

72.745

2.12 5.25

Malaysia 5.038 0.0 0.0

2.485

4.14 8.19

New Zealand* 2.2444 43.57 138.56

14544

30.32 88.80

Saudi Arabia 5.783 0.0 0.0

3.7505

2.7 9.14

Singapore 2.844 0.4 0.0

14665

41.30 103.88

Subtract from spot rate

add to spot rate

rate quoted low to high at a premium:

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.

For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 323 303.

Cost: 30p per minute (cheapest rate) 40p other times.

Other Spot Rates

Country Sterling

Dollar

Country Sterling

sport

Thrills and spills on the Solent

Stuart Alexander joins the crew of Nicorette for yesterday's Britannia Cup, the highlight of Cowes Week

I might not have been the most animated of team talk in the locker-room before the race but then again when the captain is Finnish and the crew's chosen *lingua franca* is a mixture of Swedish, German, Afrikaans and English, purple prose might have been a bit too much to expect.

Ludde Ingvall, the skipper of Nicorette, gearing up his crew before yesterday's Britannia Cup race - the most important trophy on offer at Cowes Week - seemed content on muttering a low-key message about the "classic and historic" race, the need to "get away alive" at the start and then if we could just be in front all would be fine and dandy.

The faces of the 20 crew ("No, make that 18," said New Zealander Jeff Scott, "we've got two Englishmen") were impulsive, but worryingly, there was barely a murmur of reassurance as Ingvall asked if all the damage from Tuesday's hard race had been repaired.

It is a favourite maxim of the veteran America's Cup campaigner Dennis Conner, and many others, that to finish first you first have to finish, so making sure the gear will not let you down is a crew's prime concern.

Unfortunately, the first problem hit us even before we had reached the start of the race and immediately our chances of

It was not possible to mend it, and we were left with the equivalent of a race car with no top gear

with the sailmaker on board there was not a little embarrassment.

It was not possible to mend it, the time for the race start was looming, and Ingvall was left with the equivalent of a race car with no top gear. And all the time the brains department, led by Harry Cudmore, was debating what the wind would do... Swing to the right or left, or turn into something new if the land heated up under the sun... What is the tide doing? Where is the current strongest? And, by the way, can we have the number four back up on deck because we need to use it and in the next 10 minutes?

lifting the cup presented by King George VI in 1951, took a bit of a battering.

The idea was to take a look at a couple of the bandages most likely to be used in the fresh westerly breezes on the Solent.

With just half an hour before the 10.30 start, up went a smaller job called the number four. Satisfied nods all round. It looked reasonable and was taken down to be repacked. After a slight delay, up went the larger number three.

The muscle-

men leaned on the bandages which turn the winches to pull it in tight and, easy as you like, oot popped the head of the sail. Unfortunately, as it is meant to take a strain load of about 12 tonnes and

with the sailmaker on board

there was not a little embarrass-

ment.

It was not possible to mend it, the time for the race start was looming, and Ingvall was left with the equivalent of a race car with no top gear. And all the time the brains department, led by Harry Cudmore, was debating what the wind would do... Swing to the right or left, or turn into something new if the land heated up under the sun... What is the tide doing? Where is the current strongest? And, by the way, can we have the number four back up on deck because we need to use it and in the next 10 minutes?

Going into the turn back

downwind the pace hots up

and, with the adrenalin surging, Nicorette first crossed Longobarda with less than five feet to spare, then in a nail-biting manouevre squeezed round ahead, and set off under a huge asymmetrical spinnaker.

Fortunately for your intrepid correspondent, the hard work was limited to a guest appearance on the winches for the mainsheet trimmer. Early on in

the race I even managed some worthwhile pressure. Hanging on to the flying handles then became the major achievement.

"That was exciting," said Ingvall, probably referring to the tussle with Longobarda rather than my bumble contribution.

As the atmosphere relaxed more people began to talk, different groups speaking in different languages. Two are

joking in Afrikaans about the dubious heritage of the previous day's sandwiches.

As the race progresses a couple of sail-changes go wrong.

"Same thing as yesterday," says Ingvall. "I don't know who is in charge". And going back up from Portsmouth to the finish at Cowes the opposition, especially the Russians, close in. The crew goes quiet, Harold Cud-

more pronounces: "Our only hope is he goes around on the way back out from the shore. Otherwise he has us."

It is a squeeze, but the Russian is beaten on the line as Nicorette claims 13th spot.

Longobarda beats us both on handicap, and all three are hammered by the smaller yachts with even bigger handicaps advantages.

Waller's victory points to future

If ever the Royal Ocean Racing Club needed a clear indication of the direction the competitors want the Admiral's Cup to go they should look no further than Cowes Week, last month's Cork Week and their own Commodores' Cup, writes Stuart Alexander.

In all three it has been a new breed of 41-footers developed in Australia that have been taking the silverware and yesterday's win for Ireland by Jocelyn Waller's Silk 2 in the Britannia Cup, one of the two most coveted trophies, reinforced the point.

After a scary moment the day before, when Silk 2 buried her nose in a trough and lifted half the stern out of the water, the crew came back to enjoy a glorious day which took the yachts west from the Squadron line to West Lepre, on a spinaker run to the east Solent, back on a short piece of windward work and then downhill again nearly to Portsmouth before returning home to Cowes.

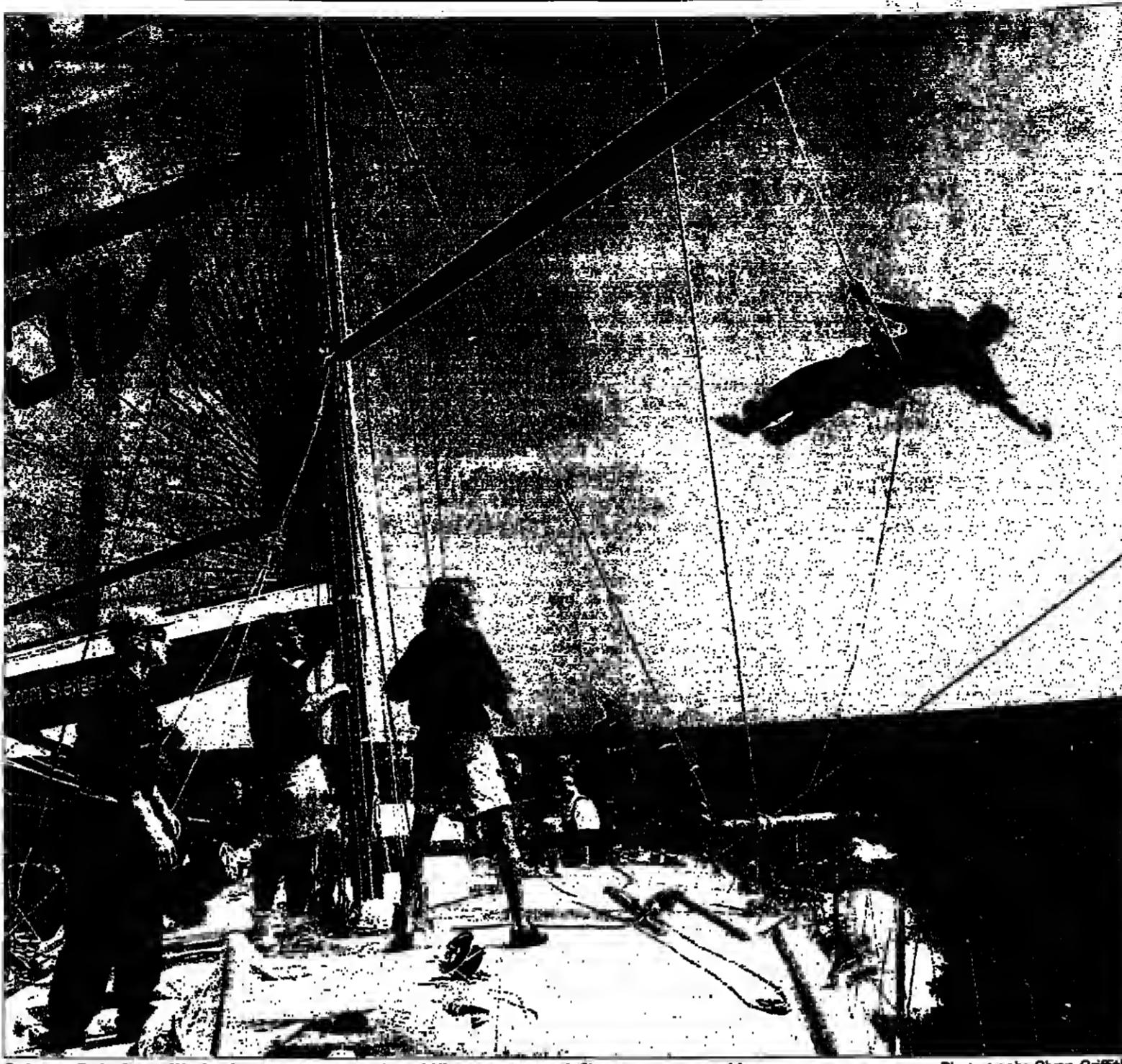
Another example, Glynn Williams' Wolf, winner of the Batushe Trophy the day before, was third, the two separated by Chris Little's new bounder, a Farr 45 one design.

As Little is to be joined by Graham Walker with another 45, the RORC has already abandoned its insistence on strict 46s for next year, and a similar proposal from the Royal Yachting Association for middle-sized 40s will be discussed in September.

Also thought to be in favour of a wider range of 40s is Richard Matthews, who will liaise between the RYA and the RORC in the search for a British team.

Also enjoying the conditions yesterday was Mike Lennon, national champion in the Melges 24 class and now leading the pack at Cowes after a finish line gust gave him victory over Russell Peters, David Clark (spinnaker wrapped round rudder), David Bedford (spinnaker ripped) and Paul Brotherton (rudder broken) all struggled with damage.

Cowes results, page 23



Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

1 THE INDEPENDENT

RACING

PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM

WIN a drive in a grand prix car



Plus prizes to be won with every grand prix

DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of wins of the Grand Prix Championship series will win our top prize - a drive in a 400bhp F1 car. You will be flown to the BBC's racing school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the recover and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.

Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.

Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.

Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.

Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there in this year's Formula One World Championship? To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you

key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and you give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you

will be asked for your name, address and telephone number. Your team selection plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

CHECKING YOUR SCORE

You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.

2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.

3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.

4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.

5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.

6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.

7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.

8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.

9. For lost PIN numbers please call: 0891 891 808. For our Helpline call: 01275 344183.

10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2pm on the Monday following a race.

DRIVERS

S25m
1 M Schumacher
S23m
2 J Alesi
3 D Hill
S20m
4 G Berger
S18m
5 D Coulthard
6 E Irvine
7 J Villeneuve
S13m
8 M Hakkinen
9 H H Frentzen
S10m
10 M Brundle
11 R Barrichello
12 J Herbert
S8m
13 M Salo
14 P Larby
S4m
15 P Diniz
16 U Katayama
17 J Verstappen
18 O Panis
S3m
19 L Badoer
20 R Rosset
21 A Montomini
S2m
22 G Fisichella*
23 V Sospiri*
24 T Marques*
25 F Lagorce*
26 H Noda*
S1m
28 M Blundell*
29 J-C Bouillon*
30 K Brack*
31 K Burt*
32 E Collard*
33 N Fontana*
34 D Franchitti*
35 N Larin*
36 J Magnusson*
37 A Prost*
38 G Tarquini*
39 K Wendlinger*

CHASSIS
S20m
41 Williams
S18m
42 Ferrari
S15m
43 McLaren
S14m
44 Sauber
45 Jordan
S10m
46 Ligier
S6m
47 Tyrrell
S5m
48 Arrows
S3m
49 Minardi
S1m
50 Forti

ENGINES

S26m
51 Renault
S18m
52 Ferrari
S15m
53 Mercedes
S12m
54 Peugeot
S10m
55 Mugen
S8m
56 Ford V10
S6m
57 Yamaha
S4m
58 Hart
S3m
59 Ford Zetec V8
S2m
60 Ford ED V8

1996 RACE SCHEDULE

Hungarian GP

August 11

Belgian GP

August 25

Italian GP

September 8

Portuguese GP

September 22

Japanese GP

October 13

jet
for r

illion
use to
ntury

EILTS

DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805 TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806
RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS LINE: 0891 891 807

100 in 150

sport

GOLF: Jack Nicklaus's designer course has European challengers on level playing field as US PGA tees off

Monty ready for sauna in sauna

TIM GLOVER

reports from Louisville

When Colin Montgomerie was beaten in an 18-hole play-off in the US Open at Oakmont, Pittsburgh, two years ago, it was so hot he ran out of shirts before running out of steam. For the 78th US PGA Championship at the Valhalla club in Kentucky, where golf will be played in conditions akin to a sauna, Monty is better prepared.

"People talk about the golf course and what have you, but I think the most important factor of the week is the heat," Monty said, relaxing with a cold drink in an air-conditioned room. In a practice round he found his mind wandering. "I was beginning to suffer around the 15th hole and my concentration went," he said. "The key is to be in the right frame mentally. You can end up in a funk or something without thinking about it, and that's just the heat."

Montgomerie is several stones lighter than he was at Oakmont, and has picked up a few tips about playing in a sauna. "I take one size larger in a glove because my hands swell so much. I'll use three or four gloves in a round, and wear light clothing and a wide-brimmed hat. I thought Oakmont was as bad as anyone could ever imagine, but this is the same."

Montgomerie, 33, is the world No 2 (behind Greg Norman), but he has not won a major championship, though he has gone close several times in America. Ernie Els beat him at Oakmont, and 12 months ago Steve Elkington rolled in a 20-foot birdie putt to win the US PGA at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles at the first hole of a sudden-death play-off.

Golfing paradise without the frills

It has taken the little matter of the 78th USPGA Championship to put a halt to Dwight Gahm's regular diet of four rounds a week at the Valhalla Golf Club. The last time Gahm, previously a loo-standing member at another Louisville club, was prevented from playing because of a tournament, he decided to build his own course...

That was in 1980, by which time a 486-acre site he owned 20 miles east of downtown had remained unused for 15 years. Along with his three sons, Walt, Gurdy and Phil, all members of the family business, Gahm set out to build a "golf only" paradise, with none of the swimming pools, tennis

champion Tom Lehman, Phil Mickelson and Corey Pavin. Incidentally, Couples, who withdrew from the Open last month, yesterday announced that he is buying the company that makes his golf clubs, Lynx Inc. Couples and other investors, including Clint Eastwood, Jack Nicklaus, Pete Sampras and Allen Paulson, the owner of Cigar, America's wonder horse, paid US\$37 million for Lynx, which makes the Black Cat brand of clubs.

Faldo described Valhalla as a thinking man's course, and on that basis he clearly thinks about two-thirds of the field of 150 can be instantly dismissed. Because Valhalla is a fresh creation, the Europeans, who often find conditions in America in August quite alien, believe they have a better chance this time. "Everyone is starting from scratch," Montgomerie said. "The fact that we're all in the same boat must give us an advantage."

In fact, they are not all in the same boat at Valhalla. As the course designer, Nicklaus, who has won the US PGA five times, has a unique insight. Imagine Michael Atherton being allowed the luxury of preparing the pitch at Headington. Whatever happens this week, Nicklaus, who yesterday posed for photographs with Muhammad Ali at the ninth green, can hardly complain about the course.

Fuzzy Zoeller, a native of these parts, is also familiar with Valhalla, having played here on a half a dozen occasions. "I'm no guarantee that my ball will roll in the hole," Zoeller said. "The only advantage I have is that I get to sleep in my own bed this week. That's a big plus." As for the heat, which yesterday was around 100 degrees, Zoeller thought it was no sweat. "This is summertime and it's hot everywhere, folks."



Kentucky fried: Ian Woosnam wipes away the sweat during a practice round at Valhalla yesterday

Slough resign from league

Hockey

BILL COLWILL

Slough, once one of the country's great hockey sides and European club champions in 1980 in Barcelona, have taken the unprecedented decision to resign from the National League.

The club, which numbers among its life members the current president of the Hockey Association, Robin Elliot, and the chairman of the HA competitions committee, Rodney Rigby, also provided Paul Barber and Ian Taylor for Great Britain's Seoul Olympic gold medal squad, notified the association earlier this week of their decision.

Kenny Partington, the club's chairman, expressed his bitter disappointment at the need for the decision yesterday, saying: "It's like having your stomach torn out. I feel that 20 years of my life has gone."

Partington highlighted the changing face of the game together with the lack of facilities the club can provide as the root of the problem: "We have not been a fashionable side during the past few years and without an artificial pitch, at our own ground we have been struggling to attract players. We just cannot compete with other neighbouring National League sides to attract players and without our own ground it has been impossible to have a youth policy."

Partington said that when training got under way for the new season, Paul Loudon, the manager, had no more than seven players available from last season's squad and, unable to boost the ranks with recruits not able to find other club players willing to play at National League level, had no option but to recommend withdrawing. It is understood that the HA has reacted to the news with horror.

Slough, who won the last of their four national indoor titles in 1984 and are current Buckinghamshire champions, plan to continue with an indoor squad and to honour their second and third XI commitments with the Pizza Express London League.

TODAY'S NUMBER

48

The number of the top 50 golfers in the world who are playing in the US PGA Championship — the last major tournament of the year — at the largely unknown and untested Valhalla course in Louisville, Kentucky.

Will this be Monty's fairway to heaven?

(Colin to go all the way: 20/1.)

TO WIN THE US PGA

Valhalla. Starts today. Live coverage on Sky.		'96 US Open	
12/1 N. Faldo	33/1 M. Brooks	33/1 D. Duval	'96 Open
14/1 E. Els	33/1 S. Elkington	46/1 B. Faxon	Revised
14/1 G. Norman	33/1 J. Leonard	40/1 J. Maggert	C
16/1 F. Couples	33/1 M. McCumber	40/1 N. Price	1/2
20/1 T. Lehman	33/1 S. Singh	40/1 W. Austin	1/2
20/1 P. Mickelson	33/1 S. Stricker	50/1 W. Woosnam	1/2
20/1 C. Montgomerie	46/1 B. Faxon	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
20/1 C. Pavin	46/1 T. Lehman	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
25/1 J. Cook	40/1 J. Maggert	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
25/1 S. Hoch	40/1 N. Price	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
25/1 D. Love III	40/1 W. Woosnam	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
25/1 M. D'Meara	50/1 W. Austin	50/1 W. Austin	1/2
EW one-pointer odds a place 1/2-1/2. Other prices on request.		Non-starter - no bet. Ladbrokes golf rules apply.	
FORECAST THE FIRST TWO HOME		12/1 N. Faldo	
'96 US Masters		12/1 N. Faldo	
Agree: 1.2.		S. Jones (100/1)	
N. Faldo (12/1)		T. Lehman (20/1)	
G. Norman (14/1)		E. Els (14/1)	
Odds Forecast odds		Dual Forecast odds	
95/1 1.18/1		155/1	

All Dual Forecast amounts based on current odds. If more than two players are in a play-off, as those players, bar outright winner, deemed to have best for 2nd place.

These odds may have changed since this newspaper was printed.

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Long makes untroubled progress

Rowing

All three British senior crews in repechage action yesterday went through to tomorrow's semi-finals of the World Championships at Strathclyde Park, Motherwell.

Chris Long, who stepped into the place vacated by the singles sculls champion, Peter Haining, after the Scot opted to move up in weight and compete in Atlanta, finished second to Estonia's Roman Lutoskin. Long led over the first 500 metres with victory in mind, but, when the Estonian took up the challenge at the half-way stage, he opted to conserve his energy and settle for second place.

The sculler Susan Appleboom took a step closer to what promises to be the most interesting final of the championships when she finished second to Hungary's Monika Remes. With four in the race and three to qualify, the competition ended when Iceland's Anna Steinbergsdottir dropped 10 seconds off the lead by the half-way mark, and survival for the others became a formality.

Easy promotion gives Appleboom the chance to recover before taking on Romania's Constanta Burica, the 1993 gold medallist, and Sarah Garner, of the United States, in her bid for a medal. Garner reputedly lost over two stones in weight over nine months to convert from heavy to lightweight sculling and in her heat beat the Romanian and Appleboom by a 16-second margin from a breakaway start.

Also through to the semi-finals is the new lightweight pairing of Jason Keys and James Brown, enjoying their first World Championships. Results, *Sporting Digest*, page 23

Harris snubbed by Warrington and poised to be a Union man

Dave Hadfield on the young player who could change codes for £1.35m

and I'm available for selection."

Warrington do out see it being as simple as that. When Harris pulled out of Sunday's game at the London Broncos citing a knee injury, the reaction of the Warrington coach, John Dorahy, to questions concerning his actual state of health, was: "You'd better ask Jonathan Davies."

Warrington believe that someone has taken Harris to the top of the mountain and showed him the shimmering golden cities below and suspect that someone is their former player, now back in league with the Welsh Rugby Union and the Cardiff club.

The truth is that Warrington are dazzled as well; dazzled by the prospect of getting a million quid for a player they are not even convinced is the right answer for them at stand-off.

That is also one source of

fear — at least in theory — to pick holes in Warrington's approach.

Dorahy and the club's football executive, Alex Murphy, are firm in their view that the last thing a young player with 15 months continuous rugby behind him needs is a winter in Scotland.

They also believe — along with St Helens and some other clubs, but unlike Wigan, who are happy for Vai'alii Tuigamala to guest at Wasps and Henry Paul at Bath — that it is one of their function to make a rival code more attractive and saleable.

Logic is on their side, but there might have to be some compromise — such as an agreement to let him go out on loan next year — if they want to rebuild their bridges with Harris.

Compromise, however, now seems the last thing on their minds. Yesterday's terse statement from the club read: "After careful consideration, the club have decided that Iestyn Harris will not be included in the team for the remaining three matches of the Super League season.

On this point, it is more dif-

Scotland will be promoted for 1997 World Cup

Scotland are in line to be included in the next World Cup after their 26-6 victory over Ireland at Twickenham on Tuesday, writes Dave Hadfield.

The performance of the native and adopted Scots after just one training session together was good enough for the game's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, virtually to promote them to the spot. Scotland, like Ireland, were included in the Emerging Nations' World Cup last year, he said. "We have seen enough improvement to say

that they should be in the World Cup proper next year."

Lindsay visualised next autumn's tournament involving 16 teams, with Scotland, Ireland and the victorious Cook Islands all elevated from the subsidiary competition. Scotland's group matches should be held in Scotland, with Ireland playing in Dublin, Lindsay said.

Other plans for Scotland and Ireland include incorporating them in an annual Five Nations tournament with England, Wales and France. "It will be written up

as a poor relation to the rugby union Five Nations, with smaller crowds, but I don't care," Lindsay said. "The point is that we are trying to spread the game, and if Scotland played France here, I would back Scotland."

Undeterred by a crowd at Twickenham of little more than a thousand, the code will press ahead with a proposal to take at least one Super League game to Ireland next season. The league's Scottish development officer, Graeme Thompson, believes there would be advantages

by the end of this month, the tour will be amended to include tests against Australia.

The Wasps rugby union club are confident of signing Vai'alii Tuigamala, the Wig wag centre, and former All Black wing, In a deal mirroring Martin Offiah's London Broncos (league) - Bedford (rugby) timeshare, Tuigamala would spend his winter season at Wasps.

Keighley Cougars have signed the £50,000 transfer-listed Oldham prop Ian Sherratt, 29, on loan to the end of the season.



Harris: Prodigious talent

"This decision was arrived at after taking into account the fact that Iestyn asked for a transfer, there are doubts over his fitness and we need to build a team to go forward without him."

There is a depressing note of finality in there that the Welsh coach, Clive Griffiths, his Great Britain counterpart, Phil Larder, and a Super League administrator watching the preparations of newly wealthy rugby union clubs with increasing alarm, will all hope is illusory.

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US PGA GOLF

Woosnam feels the heat Page 22

COWES WEEK

Thrills and spills on the Solent Page 20

SECOND TEST: Despite a lack of practice, Mike Atherton's team are ready to come out swinging at Headingley this morning

England look to batting specialists

DEREK PRINGLE
Cricket Correspondent

David Lloyd is a refreshingly innovative coach, but even he could not rescue England's practice session yesterday as the unlikely combination of rain and catering thwarted proceedings both outdoors and in.

With play in the second Test due to start this morning, any serious last-minute practice against bowling machines un-

leashing swinging yorkers had to be abandoned in favour of digging out wobbling chocolate mousses destined for today's corporate boxes.

As ever, Lloyd was quick to play down the fiasco of Yorkshire's indoor cricket school being given over to providing the food for corporate hospitality. "It's a world apart to go indoors at this time of the year," he said at yesterday's press conference. "It's a completely different game indoors

that would only perhaps benefit the batters."

That may be true, but one can only imagine the eruptions had England been greeted with the same options on a tour of Pakistan. Wasim Akram, although clearly frustrated, admitted to being amazed to find the school full of catering. "Still," he added magnanimously, "it is the same for both sides." A parity England's masterpiece of playing on a grassy pitch will be hoping to change.

Four years ago, England beat Pakistan at Headingley on a slow seaming pitch. Since then, the Test match surface has been relaid and England have yet to rediscover their winning ways, despite Atherton's assertion that this part of Yorkshire it is still England friendly.

According to the groundsman, Andy Fogarty, today's strip was apparently destined to have pace and bounce, although its retreat under covers for the last two days has inevitably greened it up and slowed it down.

This probably means that England are almost certain to dispense with Ian Salisbury and Ronnie Irani and play four seamers – including Andy Caddick – and six specialist batsmen. It is a combination that has proved successful for England in the past, although it most famously backfired against Australia in 1989, when England's lack of bowing variety saw

have been spending a lot of time away. Though I enjoy the cricket, I must go back to the business and concentrate on that.

"I was in the dressing-room during the last Test and they played the 'Winston Churchill Tapes'. I realised I was the only one who heard them live during the war, so I thought it was time to move on."

Lever, who will leave after the end of the final Test against Pakistan at the Oval on 26 August, insisted the difference in approach between the two former Lancashire team-mates had not affected the England team. "Every person has different methods but it does not mean we disagree with everything. It's important the basics are the same and I think it is with David Lloyd and myself."

Lloyd has brought patriotic music and slogans into the dressing room since being appointed at the start of the summer. This is believed to be at odds with Lever's traditional approach. "I have no axe to grind at all with David Lloyd. We have known each other for a long time and that's not the reason for me leaving. I have a business partnership with my son and I



Rain men: Mike Atherton (right) and Wasim Akram brave the weather to examine the wicket at Headingley yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

Stuck on a word?

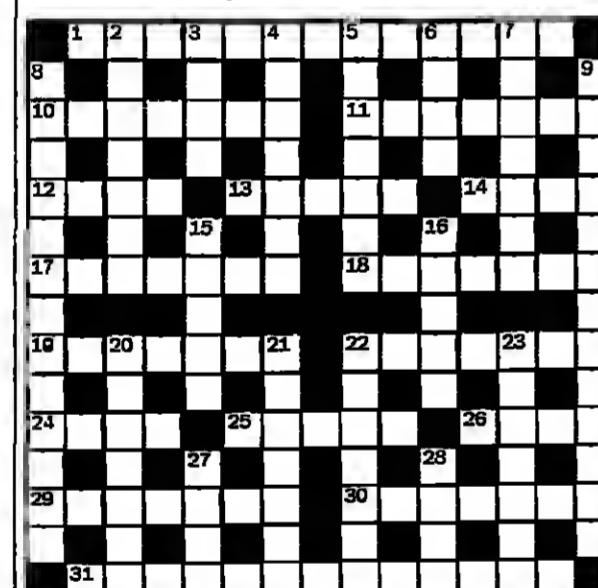
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No. 3060, Thursday 8 August

By Sparins

Wednesday's Solution



ACROSS

- Australian cobblers you might think, are people affecting lower-class tastes (8, 5)
- Head accepting private investigator's judgement (7)
- Small quantity of liquid in seamstress's ornament? (7)
- Object of admiration, terribly old one (4)
- First appearance made by union leader in insolvency case? (5)
- Injury sustained by royal person inhaling rare gas (4)
- Don't fire one in front, of course (7)
- Time enough to exercise and get hard (7)
- DOWN**
- Appropriate introduction by American poet (7)
- Transmit press article with crotal section excised (7)
- Welsh runner offering biscuit (4)
- Way in which writer appears to have finished (5)
- A work master? King first (4)
- Debouched character eating boy's meat roll (7)
- My rather attractive picture moulding? (7)
- Rugged elements subdued? (7-8)
- DOWN**
- Offensive treatment accorded to Moonies (7)
- Issue magazine's raised (4)

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Thursday 8 August 1996 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

Bicknell bounces back for Surrey

MIKE CAREY

reports from Southport
Surrey 211, Lancashire 128-5

Australia run up a total in excess of 600.

If six batsmen play, Nick Knight will take up a new position at No 6, his left-handedness being seen as a foil to Waqar Younis, should the ball start to reverse swing in the middle of the innings – a phenomenon so devastating that England have been busy studying videotapes, and without revealing what they are, Atherton claims most of the batsmen have made small adjustments to their game.

Even so, England go into this match with five of their top six – Atherton, Alec Stewart, Gra-

ham Thorpe, John Crawley and Knight – out having played anything but one-day cricket since the end of the Lord's Test 10 days ago. Rest is a priority now, Lloyd's agenda, and rightly so, but the absence of any significant practice here because of the weather cannot have helped players to prepare for this match.

Pakistan have been similarly frustrated, but while England welcome back Nasser Hussain and Chris Lewis from injury, the visitors lose their vice-captain, Asmir Sohail, not yet recovered from the injury he received at

Lord's. His place will probably be taken by Asif Mujtaba, a gritty left-hander who can bat anywhere, although it is the teenager Shadab Kabir who will open with Saeed Anwar.

Wasim, with the safety net of a wicket behind him, was upbeat and confident, joking that if what Lloyd had told him about the pitch was true – that it was the same colour as the green outfield – he may even have to drop Mushtaq Ahmed to play a fourth pace bowler.

There is a lot of balls talked about most sport, but never has so much discussion centered on

a first-ball yorker. While Nick Knight held on valiantly for a time after taking flings to the hand and chest, Graham Lloyd threw the bat vigorously at anything resembling a full length until caught off a faint edge.

Surrey had batted too much

the same

as well as they might have done. Thereafter, when the bat was not being passed several times an over, the batsman was usually being struck on one part of the anatomy or another. Take three successive balls that Adam Hol-

ioake received from Ian Austin, who predictably used the conditions better than anyone: the first struck him in the groin, the second flew to the wicket-keeper at head-height and the third rattled him on the glove.

Brendon Julian, using his long reach, gave Surrey something to bowl at by making 41 from 43 balls. Even Austin allowed himself to be hooked out of the ground by Julian and on to an adjacent railway line.

The fall of 15 wickets in a day meant the umpires were obliged to inform the Test and County Cricket Board, but no further action will be called for.

Wenger to think over England offer

Arseco Wenger, the former coach of Monaco, says he will decide by the end of this month whether to become the Football Association's technical director.

The Frenchman confirmed that he had been contacted directly and offered the position by Glenn Hoddle, the England manager, who played under him in France in the late 1980s.

"I have to think it over," said Wenger from his home in Japan, where he is coaching Nagoya Grampus Eight. "I'm very happy here." Asked whether he might stay in Japan, as his contract expires in December, Wenger said: "It's not out of the question. I have to tell Nagoya by the end of August."

Leicester City are preparing a bid for the highly-rated IFK Gothenburg and Sweden winger Jesper Blomqvist, who may be available at about £2m. Wolves, who are still talking terms with the Everton goalkeeper Neville Southall, are also keen on Serge Romano, a right-back with the French club, Marignac. The Third Division club Hull City are also going continental, and have signed the former Deportivo La Coruna defender, Antonio Doncel.

The FA have been looking for a technical director since they sacked Graham Taylor as England manager in 1993 after his side failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup final.

United and Blackburn deny Klinsmann move

Football

RUPERT METCALF

Both Blackburn Rovers and Manchester United went to great lengths yesterday to dismiss speculation that Jürgen Klinsmann was about to return to the Premiership. The former Tottenham forward is, it seems, to stay with Bayern Munich, the club he joined from Spurs last year, for at least another season.

After a week of rumours of Klinsmann sightings in east Lancashire, Blackburn have denied that they are about to spend any of the £15m they received for Alan Shearer on the man who led Germany to success in the European Championship this summer.

Following various reports in the newspapers and on the radio this morning linking Jürgen Klinsmann with Blackburn Rovers, the club can say that these rumours are unfounded," Robert Coar, Rovers' chairman, said yesterday.

Likewise, Manchester United have dismissed similar spec-

ulation about their transfer market intentions. "I am perfectly happy with the strikers already on the payroll at Old Trafford," Alex Ferguson, their manager, said. "The fact that we tried to sign Alan Shearer is to reflect on the ability on the strikers at this club. It was a one-off situation. I would have been surprised to see Klinsmann playing in England again. My information is that, if he had got

involved somewhere along the line at Lincoln," Kevin Keegan, Newcastle's manager, said.

Robbie Elliott, Newcastle's former England Under-21 left-back, is discussing a move to Blackburn. Nottingham Forest enquired about the 22-year-old last week, but were deterred by his £3.5m price tag.

The Leeds United striker, Tony Yeo, may miss the start of the season – the Ghanaian sees a specialist today after suffering a knee injury in Germany last week.

Manchester City will sign the Australian striker, Damian Mori, this week if they can agree terms

with his club, Adelaide City. City have already agreed a fee of £500,000 for Mori, who joined them on their pre-season tour of China, but Adelaide are unhappy with arrangements for the payment of fee.

Leicester City are preparing a bid for the highly-rated IFK Gothenburg and Sweden winger Jesper Blomqvist, who may be available at about £2m. Wolves, who are still talking terms with the Everton goalkeeper Neville Southall, are also keen on Serge Romano, a right-back with the French club, Marignac. The Third Division club Hull City are also going continental, and have signed the former Deportivo La Coruna defender, Antonio Doncel.

The FA have been looking for a technical director since they sacked Graham Taylor as England manager in 1993 after his side failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup final.

Wenger coached Monaco from 1987 until he was sacked in September 1994. His side won the French league title in 1988 and reached the European Cup-Winners Cup final in 1992.

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